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"*He that hath marvelled shall reign.*"

"*Wherefore have ye not perceived the reasonableness of the Scriptures?*"

—GOSPEL TO THE HEBREWS

"*My humanity is the road by which men must travel.*"—SUSO

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I

MARK JOHN was only a boy then, and what he wrote down he learnt from Peter. Peter was there, but he was hauling up the boats, and didn't know what had happened until he heard the shouts and saw the swine break away and rush down the hillside into the sea. He never saw the madman until all the swine were dead. How, then, did he know enough to tell Mark John? Well, of course, he heard the others talk. And then that was Peter's way. He was always sure that he knew everything until he did some hot-tempered, silly action, and then he was sure that he knew nothing. He would believe everything or nothing according to his temper towards the teller. He did not care for the labour of weighing facts to decide between false and true. You could never make Peter believe that even when people describe a thing as they think they saw it they may still speak falsehood. If a man told Peter that he had met a demon or

a magician in the mountains Peter would be quite sure that it was a magician or a demon, unless the man who said he saw it was a Scribe or a Pharisee, and then Peter would say he was a liar.

Always Peter hated the explanations given by others. He never wanted to ask how things had happened. He felt so strongly that he was sure he knew and that other more subtle explanations smelt of the Scribes. Later he grew into somewhat of a tyrant, but always he was lovable.

Luke was not there. I do not know who told him. Yes, he was an educated man; but he was a physician, and he seldom saw beyond the things of the body. Witness the way he changed the Blessings. Peter never made such mistakes about the Message; to the end he loved the poor, but Luke wanted to keep them orderly.

Peter and Luke and Mark John—they are all dead now, and I can speak my mind. When they were here I often tried, but they did not want to listen. They liked their own way of seeing the miracle best, and, so, for the sake of peace and good-fellowship, I ceased to speak. If it were the truth, then one day it would prevail. So I kept silence. But you are waiting to know about the swine and the madman.

The dawn was breaking when we reached the land after that stormy passage across the lake,

and I followed Jesus up the slope of the shore to the headlands. Peter and the other fishermen were busy hauling up the boats; some of the people who, like me, had been passengers, lay down to sleep, some followed us far behind in a little group. The light spread over the hills was purple and pink, and the stillness was broken only by the cheep of a sleepy bird.

I do not know if Jesus prayed as he walked, but I felt the stillness and the loneliness brought God near, and I followed in silence. When we reached the brow of the headland it was full daylight, and there, in the distance, was the herd of swine, slowly rooting its way towards us. The swineherds had turned aside to eat their morning meal, and, as they ate, pigs of all sizes and colours, of all ages and shapes, moved on alone, occupied only with filling their bellies. Here a small pig grunted in anger as he was pushed aside by a gaunt sow, whose barren dried-up teats touched the earth. There a great boar, with tusks pushed up under his lip, thrust himself out from the crowd with sidelong blows of his heavy head to seize the portion of some smaller pigs, who fled, squealing.

Jesus stood still to watch, and, as he watched, he smiled. When he spoke, it was to answer the question that had remained unspoken in my mind.

"No," he said, "why should we call them unclean? They are God's creatures, as we all are."

He turned as a man came forward out of the group that stood behind and said,

"Rabbi, it is not safe to be here. There are madmen amongst the tombs."

The man was urgent. Jesus looked him straight in the eyes, as if to measure him, and the man returned the look as straightly and went on speaking.

"They are possessed by demons. They tear their flesh—they can be heard screaming day and night. It is not safe to be here."

"How do you know they are possessed by demons?" asked Jesus.

"What else could it be?" said the man, "There are none that can master them. They are too fierce to be tamed."

"Has any man tried to tame them?" asked Jesus.

"Yes, Rabbi. They have been bound with chains and fetters. There was one that I saw. He plucked the fetters from him as a child might break a chain of field flowers. Then he ran, foaming, into the wilderness, and no man dare pass by that way now."

Jesus was silent. His eyes were bent on the

ground, and, after a space, the man spoke again, and it was as if he made excuse.

"Rabbi, the demons make the man cut his flesh with stones; they tear his clothes to pieces. Men fear to touch him now. He goes naked."

Jesus lifted his eyes to the man's face.

"Have men tried only this way to tame him?" he asked.

"What other way is there, Rabbi?" asked the man.

"There is God's way," said Jesus. "Come. Let us try it," and he went towards the tombs. The man stepped back.

"Rabbi," he faltered. He turned to his companions, and fear seemed to seize upon them. Jesus stopped and looked back. His gaze went from man to man, and then his eyes fell upon me. It was as if a power passed from him to me, and immediately something inside me answered.

"Lead, and I follow," I said, and he went forward again. The others debated a while, and then, with hesitation and doubting, they, too, followed. The swineherds, who had drawn near to hear, joined themselves to the men, and left their pigs rooting and grunting.

It was not many cubit lengths to the tombs, but the others were far behind when we reached that desolation.

"Do men live here?" asked Jesus, as he looked at the abomination around us. I did not answer. I was watching for the madman. I think I caught sight of him at the moment that he first saw us, for, as I touched Jesus to point to his naked figure, he began to run towards us shrieking and bounding in the air. He had two sharp stones in his hands, and as he leapt he cut his flesh with them, and the blood ran down his naked limbs. The men behind us scattered and fled down the hillside; but Jesus stood still and waited.

I was about to step forward, thinking that the maniac would leap upon Jesus, when the miracle happened. For the man as if against his will stopped short. Then he opened his palms, and casting the sharp stones from him, he bowed himself to the ground before Jesus, and in a most piteous voice and with tears he cried:

"What do you want with me, O Son of the most high God? Do not say that you also have come here to torment me!"

"What is your name?" asked Jesus, and at the sound of his voice the man lifted up his head and answered bitterly,

"My name is Legion, for there are many possessing me."

"Why do you say you are possessed of demons?" said Jesus.

"I did not say it," answered the man. "It was they who said it when they loaded me with chains and tormented me in my agony. They will torture me again if they catch me," he cried, leaping to his feet as the men behind, seeing him quieted, came nearer.

Jesus turned and told the men to stand back. Then he put out his hand and touched the man.

"Be at peace!" he said. "There is none that will torment you now. You need no longer tear your clothes, or shriek, or cut your body with stones to frighten your torturers away."

The man fell on his face, and again bowed his head at the feet of Jesus.

"I was in fear," he said. "They were many, and I was one, and when the agony came upon me and they bound me with chains, I broke them like straws and fled. I was in fear."

"Fear is a foul spirit," said Jesus, "cast it out from you." And the man answered humbly:

"I will." And Jesus put his own cloak upon him and led him apart amongst the tombs to where he could wash the blood from his limbs.

It was then that the swineherds, who with the others devoured by curiosity had drawn near again, remembered their swine, and turning saw them on the edge of the cliff.

"See!" cried one to the other, "the swine are in danger. We shall lose some of them."

They ran warily, one to each end of the cliff (knowing the nature of swine and how they refuse to be driven save where they wish to go), meaning to get between the swine and the sea; but the other men being ignorant and unskilful, yet wishing to help, ran swiftly down the hillside in the face of the swine, who, seeing them come in haste, turned quickly and rushed in a mass towards the sea.

"Stand back!" shouted the swineherds. "You will drive them over the cliff." But it was too late. The swine had rushed one upon another, and the slope was steep, and in a moment they were swept over the edge of the cliff into the sea. The swineherds tore their hair when they saw the herd rush into the sea. They ran to the cliff edge and looked over to see where the swine were drowning in the deep water below.

"It is your fault," they cried to the men. "You rushed them down the hillside. We had but left them for a moment and, behold, they are all lost! What shall we tell our master? We cannot save them now. It is your fault." And they menaced the men. But the men answered back:

"How could we tell they would run like that? It was not our fault. We came to help you, and

you say it was our fault." And the man who had spoken to Jesus about the madman cried out suddenly:

"It is the devils. They went into the swine. Did you not see how they left the madman? They talked with the Rabbi, and he gave permission for them to enter into the swine."

"But they were not his swine," cried the herds. "What right had he to drown our swine?"

"They were unclean beasts, and only fit for devils," cried the man. "It is not lawful to keep such beasts. Come, and ask for yourselves." And he brought the herds to where Jesus sat with the poor madman, now soothed and quiet, at his feet. And they told Jesus, and asked him if it were not true that the devils had entered into the swine out of the man; and he questioned them, and when they told how the pigs had rushed down the hillside when they had tried to drive them, he was sad, and said:

"They were afraid. It was the same devil that possessed this man." But the men did not understand.

"It must be so," said one swineherd to the other. "We will go and tell our master. How could we watch against demons? He will surely see that it was not our fault."

By this time a crowd had gathered from the

boats and from the countryside, and they stood and watched Jesus and the madman as if they could not believe their eyes.

"Will any man give clothes to the naked?" Jesus asked them, and they ran to find clothes and brought food, which they put before the man. But all the time they were afraid, for the rumour had gone abroad that Jesus had sent the devils into the swine, and they feared the next thing. When the swineherds returned with their master, and he saw the madman sitting clothed, he, too, was afraid. And he talked with the crowd, and some of them came forward, and he asked if they might speak, and when Jesus gave them leave, they begged him to go away out of their country, for they had fear of him. And Jesus, looking at them, saw that it was true, for they trembled as they spoke, and he had compassion on them, and said that he would go, and he went down to the boats.

Peter was there, ready to put out, for he had heard the rumour, and knew the people were afraid. And the poor madman came too, and pressed upon Jesus that he might come with him, but Jesus refused him, and told him he must go home.

"You will be better at home," he said; "go to your own people and tell them of all God has

done for you, and how he took pity on you," and he told the crowd that they were to care for him.

"They will do him no injury," Peter muttered, as I helped him to push off. "They will be too much afraid that the devils will come back, and, perhaps, enter into their cattle this time. The Master was right to smite iniquity. It was well done to destroy those unclean beasts. It was sin to keep them."

But he said no word to Jesus, and he would not heed when I tried to tell what kind of devil it was that Jesus had sent out of the madman, and that had entered into the swine.

II

LUKE was a just man, but he did not love easily. He had an inquiring mind, always searching out causes, and he watched and weighed his fellow men before he joined his mind to theirs. He was a physician, and he followed Jesus at first because he was curious to see him heal disease. Afterwards he followed him because he loved him. Luke met all men with curiosity, but John met them with love. John would have loved even the Pharisees, if any man could love a Pharisee; but Luke hated them because they sought to stop inquiry. It seemed to come easy to John to love. There was no bitterness in him, and even if he spoke harshly of evildoers, when he met them face to face he was always ready to love them. It was small wonder that men made him their friend. Luke was sure of himself. If he did not know, he felt he would some day find knowledge; but John was meek at heart. He was always prone to believe that other men knew better than he did, and that, I think, was why he loved Jesus. He leant on him, finding rest

in him from his own uncertainty. For there was no uncertainty in Jesus. His speech was direct and swift, and his look a keen sword. I have seen him cow even the Pharisees. That Sabbath day when he healed the man with the withered arm, his speech was like a fierce flame, and the Pharisees could not stand before it.

There had been much talk of Jesus and of how he spent the seventh day. The Pharisees condemned him, and said he did evil because he walked and talked with his friends on the Sabbath, even though they knew that most of his friends worked for their bread on six days of the week, and if they had not used the leisure of the seventh would have seen little of Jesus. But the Pharisees grumbled, for they were tyrants. What matters, said each Pharisee in his heart, that the Romans rule over men's bodies if we can tie their souls? So they strove always to bind men by their rules. They rebuked Luke because he was curious to inquire into things, and condemned him when he made answer and questioned them, disputing their authority. So, too, they who toiled not sought to parcel out the leisure that the seventh day brought to men like Peter, whose days were spent in labour. They hated Jesus, who spoke against their rules and wished men to be happy, and therefore they tried always to trap

him in argument and to put him in the wrong before the people.

That Sabbath morning Luke and I had followed Jesus and John and the others through the cornfields, and as we went Luke talked to me of Jesus and of how he answered the Pharisees.

"Not once have I seen him snared by them," he said. "He knows the law better than they do, and when they come in their long garments, with texts on their lips, he answers them out of the Scriptures and confounds them. Were you there when they rebuked him because Peter's hands were dirty?"

"No," I answered, "a man of Peter's trade would be hard put to it if he had always to keep his hands clean."

"Ah, but he was eating," Luke made reply. "It was by the lake, and the fishermen had pulled up their boats, and were about to eat their bread when the Pharisees came up. Peter and the rest were sweaty and dirty after their morning's work (they had been on the lake since dawn), while the Pharisees were clean and cool in their unstained robes. They stood and watched Peter break his bread. Andrew, too, had dirty hands, and the Pharisees watched him also, and the others as well. When they had gazed their fill

(and no man likes to be gazed at when at meat), they said to Jesus:

" 'Why do you not see to it that your disciples follow the traditions of our ancestors? Their hands are defiled.' Peter flushed to the eyes. He takes offence easily, as you know, but it was an affront to him, and the others were hurt, too. Jesus looked at their faces, and when he saw they were hurt he spoke swiftly.

" 'It is easy for those who toil not to be clean. Peter's hands are dirty now, for he is working for the living of his wife and mother. Is it not God's commandment that you honour your father and mother?'

"Mathias made answer that it was also the law to wash before eating."

"Mathias," I cried, "was Mathias there?"

"He was one of them," said Luke. "I do not know if Jesus had heard of him. I do not think he had. But let me tell, and you shall judge. While Mathias spoke Jesus watched his face, and when he had finished speaking he still watched for a space before he answered. Then he said:

" 'Isaiah spoke well when he said of hypocrites—"they honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." Which is better? To eat with hands soiled in the service of your parents, like Peter here, or to keep clean hands while

neglecting to serve them? Does it suffice to pay lip-service to your parents and leave them to hunger? Is God so small that he approves when you purchase honour for yourselves by giving to him what ought to keep others from want?'

"Mathias was abashed, and had no answer. I do not know if Jesus knew of his gifts to the Temple or if he but read his heart. What think you?"

"Are his parents in poverty?" I asked.

"It is said so," answered Luke. "There was much talk about it when the High Priest praised him for his gifts."

"If Jesus had been told he would not have spoken," I said. "He read his heart."

"I thought it must be as you say," said Luke. "For afterwards he called them and said that his meaning was that nothing could defile a man but his own evil thoughts and all the imaginations that coming out from him end in evil deeds. Eating with dirty hands could but defile his body, but would leave his soul untouched."

"And Mathias?" I asked.

"He went humbly away, separating himself from the others. I think Jesus did but read his heart, and Mathias knew, for he was ashamed."

By this time we had reached the end of the

corn land, and on the track beyond we saw a group of men standing.

"See, the Pharisees are lying in wait for him. Let us hear what they have to say," said Luke. And we went forward to join Jesus and the others.

Some of the disciples as they walked through the field had plucked the ears of corn, and idly rubbing them between their palms had blown away the chaff, and were chewing the grain. There is a clean taste about grain rubbed straight from the ear, and it is pleasant to eat.

"They have a grievance to put before him," whispered Luke. "What have they fastened on now?"

The spokesman of the Pharisees was a tall, old man with narrow eyes and hard lips. He pointed to Peter.

"Look," he said to Jesus, "why are your disciples doing what is not allowed on the Sabbath?"

Jesus's eyes followed the gesture of the Pharisee, and for a moment he searched Peter to see what was wrong. Peter's jaws were still working and when Jesus saw the grain in his hands he smiled as he turned to the Pharisees.

"Is it the grain?" he asked. His eyes were clear and gay, and in his face, burnt brown by the

sun, was the joy of a young man who rejoices in life.

"Have you never read what David did when he was hungry?" he said to the Pharisees, and he smiled at them even as he caught them in their own trap. It was as if he would have had them also for friends, for he mocked them gaily as friend mocks friend.

"Do you not remember that he went into the Temple with his friends and asked the High Priest to give him the Holy Bread, and the High Priest gave them the bread for which David had asked?"

The Pharisees were silent. No man gave back smile for smile.

Jesus spoke on, still smiling.

"And do not the Priests in the Temple break the Sabbath every seventh day, and yet are not counted guilty?"

"It is not the same thing," said the Pharisee eagerly.

"Why not?" asked Jesus.

"David was about the king's business," said the old man.

"Are not these men about the business of God?" asked Jesus. "They have toiled all the week, and rest now to prepare for the toil of another week. Is not that the business of God?"

"They are only fishermen, but the Priests are the servants of God," said the old man, sourly.

"Are not these men also the servants of God?" Jesus questioned, but the Pharisee would not answer.

"They are not as David or as the Priests," he repeated doggedly. "They are only fishermen, and they are breaking God's law."

And the other Pharisees murmured agreement.

The gaiety left the face of Jesus, and the mirth departed from his speech.

"Where did you learn God's law, you who know nothing of God himself?" he said. "Your talk of God is only hearsay. Your only knowledge of him is what you have heard other men tell of him. If you had known him of yourselves you would understand what he meant when he said 'I desire mercy, not sacrifices,' and you would not condemn the guiltless. You can have no friendship with God yourselves, for if you were his friends you would know that he made the Sabbath for men and not men for the Sabbath. Come, let us go," he said to the disciples, and went on, leaving the Pharisees in the roadway.

"They are angry because they cannot find an answer," said Luke; and we joined ourselves on to Jesus and walked with him.

It was as if a cloud had come over the sun,

for the joy had died out of him and his face was sad.

"The Pharisees seek to tie all men down by their own rules," he said, and Luke questioned:

"Are there to be no rules?"

"Rules forced upon a man against his will from without must be broken, or his soul is lost," said Jesus. "Only the rules to which a man consents within himself can stand. The Pharisees make their own opinions rules for all, and so lay burdens too heavy to be borne upon the shoulders of men. They do not wish men to be happy."

"They are against all those who search for truth," said Luke, and Jesus smiled upon him as he answered:

"All men are far from truth, but those who put the Law before kindliness will never find it. The Pharisees err because they do not know that if a man love not he cannot have vision."

Luke questioned him further, seeking to find how the Pharisees had fallen into error, and how love could give them vision, and Jesus smiled again as he answered him.

"It is because of the hardness of their hearts. They mistrust all men, therefore their eyes are holden."

And when Luke questioned still more, he said:

"See you, are not we all members one of another

and therefore how can one man find truth for himself? If his opinions make him hate his fellow men, let him cast them out, for he may be sure he is far from God when he is divided from his fellows."

"But he may know more than they, and they be unwilling to listen to him," said Luke.

"Let him keep silent then, and love his neighbour, and his reward will follow," said Jesus.

By this time we had come to the synagogue, and Jesus led the way into it. The Pharisees had gone round by another path, and the synagogue was full of them and of their friends. Jesus went apart and prayed in silence, and for a time we prayed also, and then Luke touched me and I looked round.

The Pharisees were thronged together, and in their midst slowly pushing his way forward was a man. His garments were old, and as he pushed his way, he looked from face to face as if seeking some one.

"See, his arm is withered. He seeks Jesus. He would be healed," said Luke, and, as he spoke, the man caught sight of Jesus, who had finished his prayer, and who stood alone, the Pharisees having fallen back on all sides of him. The man pushed on through the crowd, till he came to within a few paces of Jesus. Here he stopped,

and, with the Pharisees thronged behind him, stood still and looked at Jesus. He spoke no word, nor did the Pharisees, but each in his heart knew that the man pleaded for healing.

Jesus looked at the man, with his useless arm and that woeful entreaty in his eyes. Then he looked round the circle of Pharisees, his gaze dwelling on one face after another, as if seeking leave to help. No man answered that look. Jesus said to the man:

"Stand forth in the middle," and the man, poor, pitiable creature, stepped forth, his ragged haik hanging from him in such wise that his withered arm could be seen of all men and his misery made manifest.

Again Jesus made question of the faces round him, and with wonder, as if, having shown them the man's misery, he marvelled that they could withhold leave to show mercy. There was neither pity nor mercy in those bitter faces, and after a silence, Jesus spoke:

"Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath?" he asked, "or only harm? May I save life, or only destroy it?"

There was no answer. No matter what the misery, rules must not be broken. The man must suffer.

Once more, for the last time, Jesus searched

their faces, and then, suddenly, his eyes lit up, and it was as if a lightning had flashed across the synagogue. His anger was so vivid and strong that the Pharisees fell back in fear, and huddled one upon another.

Jesus turned to the man and spoke.

"Stretch forth your hand!" he commanded, and the power that went from him to the man was a power that confounded and conquered tyranny. The man, his pleading dog's eyes still fixed on Jesus's face, stretched forth his hand, and to the amazement of all men, it was whole.

It was after that healing that the Pharisees began to plot how to kill him.

III

IT was in the house of Simon that I first saw Jesus. Simon was a Pharisee, but not of the stricter sort. He mixed much with the Gentiles, and spake often of great Rome which he had visited, and of its iniquities into which he had made curious inquiry. He was rich and had many friends, for he liked to know all men and to hear of every new thing. It was rumoured that if there was much talk of any man, Simon would seek him out and ask him to meat; but I do not know the truth of this.

It was some time after men first began to talk of Jesus that one day I met Simon, and he asked if I had heard of the new Prophet. I answered that no man could avoid hearing of him, so great was the talk, and he said:

"He eats meat at my house to-day. Come and see him there. Levi is coming, and I have asked a few dancing girls, harlots though they be."

I was astonished and said:

"But, Simon, I hear this Jesus is a follower of John the Baptizer, and he scorned the flesh. His followers fast and pray without ceasing."

"This prophet does not fast," said Simon, wagging his beard. "He is not like John. John had a demon, but Jesus likes music and feasting. They say he consorts much with the lewder sort, and makes his friends of publicans and outcasts. He has bewitched Levi, who has thrown up his tax-gathering to follow him. But come and see for yourself. If he be a prophet, he will know what manner of women these dancing girls are, and be on his guard against them."

He went on his way and I on mine, and as I walked I pondered on what he had said, and after a space I turned aside into the Street of the Prostitutes to seek out Mary of Magdala, who had her dwelling there. Mary, like Simon, knew all men, and was known of all. She could tell me more of this Jesus. Mary's house, like Rahab's, was on the wall, and there I found her in the outer room, seated on a carpet making play with a stringed instrument, while she listened to the talk of the men around her. She was a beautiful woman, upright as a flame, with hair like a raven's wing, and deep dark eyes. Her voice was beautiful, too, with a little hoarse break in it when she was moved that stirred men's hearts.

When I had greeted her I told her I had come for tidings of the new Prophet, and she answered

scornfully with a wave of her hand towards her companions.

"They talk of nothing but the new Prophet. He has turned men's heads."

"But you know, Mary," cried Sadoc, a young fop who aped the Roman way of speech. "He is so new. We have not had one of his sort before."

'Old prophet or new prophet," said Mary, "it matters nothing to me. Prophets come not my way."

"You need not fear him, Mary," said another man jestingly. "He will not be hard on you. Have you not heard what he said when they haled that other woman before him?"

"What woman?" asked Mary, idly twanging the strings of her instrument.

"I do not know her name," said the man. "But they caught her in her guilt, and dragged her to the new Prophet for condemnation. When they accused her to him—and they had caught her in the very act—at first he would say nothing, and when they pressed him for a judgment, he said if there was one man there who had never sinned with a woman, he could cast the first stone."

Mary looked up suddenly.

"And was there?" she asked with that hoarse break in her voice.

The men laughed.

"Of course not. What man could say that?" cried one of them.

"Of course not," Mary echoed. "And the woman? What happened to her?"

"They left her with the Prophet. I do not know what he said. But he sent her away, for she still lives."

"Perchance he sent her for the man," said Mary.

"What man?" asked the other.

"The man who shared her guilt. Is it not the Law that he be stoned, too? Why did they not take him also before the Prophet?"

The men laughed again.

"I suppose he did not wait to be taken, but fled like Joseph," said the man who had told the tale.

"Leaving the woman to be stoned?" said Mary. "And this Prophet had mercy. What did you say his name was?"

"He is called Jesus. He is from Nazareth."

"Do not be uneasy, Mary," said Sadoc. "No man could condemn you. You are too beautiful."

"If my beauty is all that saves me from condemnation I have poor protection," said Mary.

"Even a prophet could see how beautiful you are," said the fop in his foolish voice.

"John did not see the beauty of Salome," said Mary shortly.

"John was possessed," said one of the men. "This Jesus is different. He knows what men are."

Mary rose suddenly from her carpet, flinging the instrument aside.

"Can any prophet know men as we, we harlots, do?" she asked, and we all stood silent, amazed at her passion.

"I will go to Simon's and see this man," she said, and went towards the inner chambers of her house.

"Stay, Mary," cried Sadoc. "I have a gift for thee"; but she did not heed him, but went in, leaving him there on the threshold. He turned back to us, and showed us an alabaster box which he held in his hand.

"I will wait and give her this when she has recovered from her anger," he said. "Mary loves perfumes, and this is priceless. One drop will perfume a whole room."

We left him there, and I walked down the Street of the Prostitutes with one of the other men, who said: "That fool Sadoc wishes to buy Mary's love, but she will have none of him. He has great riches, but Mary is not like other harlots to be bought for a price of any man."

"How, then, did she become such a one?" I asked.

"They say her lover deserted her. She was not brought up to the trade. Her people are respectable citizens of Bethany. Think you she will go to Simon's?"

"He told me he had dancing girls. Why not Mary, too?" I said.

"Dancing girls to amuse a prophet? What is the world coming to! John would have cursed them," said the man with a laugh.

There was a great crowd outside Simon't house when we reached it. The Prophet had just gone in, and the people lingered, hoping to see him again.

"All the world is running after this Jesus," said my companion as we pressed through the throng in the courtyard into the house.

Inside there were many people, and I could not see Simon. I separated from my companion and stood apart, waiting for Simon to show me my place. As I waited I searched the faces if perchance I might be able to pick out the Prophet from the other men before Simon came and pointed him out. It is always an interest to watch the faces of men, and here, though there were many I knew, there were some whom I had never seen before. There were faces beautiful and ugly, gloomy or gay, subtile or foolish. Some men were talking, some silent, most were in washed

white raiment with newly-rolled headgear. My eyes wandered from one to another, and then fell on a group of men in a corner and stopped, arrested by the face of one of them.

It was not its beauty that chained my eyes, though it was a face beautiful to look upon. Nor was it the light in the eyes, though that rejoiced the heart. It was the tranquillity of the face that held me; a tranquillity, not of sloth or emptiness, but of surety; the tranquillity of one who rested in a certainty greater than other men knew.

"That man has the secret of life," I thought, and as if I had spoken the words aloud the man's eyes turned, and his gaze met mine.

There was something in the look that stirred my soul. The tranquillity did not leave his face, but there came a questioning into his eyes, and then a wistfulness that melted me to pity.

"He is lonely," I thought. "He seeks friends. He asks somewhat of me." And my heart leapt within me. The eyes held mine for a moment, and then some man spoke and he turned to answer.

I do not remember the next thing. I was like a man who sees a vision in a crowd and straightway forgets all but his vision. Mary must have come in, for there was a stir about me of men pressing forward to see, and some one spat on the ground as she passed. When I came to myself

the guests had gone into the inner rooms to eat. I did not follow them. My mind was set on that question in the eyes of Jesus. He asks something of me, I thought. What is it? Would he count me, too, among his friends?

I do not know how long I sat there, but, after a time, Simon came out. When he saw me he came and sat beside me, and wiped his brow with the edge of his robe.

I called my attention back and regarded him. His face was flushed and he was uneasy.

"You have not gone in?" he said. "Mary has been making a fool of herself. There is something about Jesus, I know not what. He rebuked me to my face, but I cannot bear malice. Mary has wasted her perfume, and my party is spoilt."

"What has happened?" I asked.

"I do not know. Jesus did nothing that I saw. She wept, and poured the perfume on his feet and wiped them with the hair of her head. You can never count on a woman. Their ways are always crooked."

It was then that Mary came forth, followed by that foolish fop, Sadoc, and by some other men. Her face was stained with the tears she had shed and her eyelids swollen.

Simon rose up to meet her, but before he could speak she cried out:

"Do not reproach me, Simon. I meant but to look upon the Prophet, but Sadoc's perfume was in my hand and I could not help myself."

"He rebuked me to my face because of you," muttered Simon.

"And well you deserved it, Simon. You offered him no honour. You gave him no kiss. No, not even wherewithal to wash the dust from his feet. He alone saw that that was why I did it. Even honour paid by a harlot is better than no honour at all. See, I am weeping again." And the tears fell from her eyes.

"How was I to know he would expect honour?" said Simon, and he went away into the inner room.

"Do not weep, Mary," said one of the men. "He had no right to upset you so. Who is he to forgive sins and call other people sinners?"

"He did not say he forgave my sins. He said they were forgiven. And I am a sinner. But I will never sin again."

"You are not going to desert us, Mary," cried Sadoc in distress, catching her by the sleeve.

"How can I help deserting you when I have seen something higher?" she replied.

"You are going to that Jesus," said the fop in disgust.

Mary turned on him, her eyes flashing under her painted brows.

"You fool! You fool! Are you blind that you cannot see he is too great for that folly? He knows the bitterness that lies in the heart of a harlot. He will never add to that pain."

"He will never love you as I do," said Sadoc.

"Love!" cried Mary. "For years have I been the vessel of men's lusts, and it was never love they brought me. I know, for I have loved. Love is a giving. And I have given, with both hands have I given, and never have I had aught but lust in return. And never till this day has any man seen that I loved."

"He will desert you, Mary," said one of the men.

"Are you all blind that you say such things?" she said. "Can you not see that he loves the soul of every man? He will never lust to possess the body. If he makes me his friend he will never desert me."

"How do you know so much about him, Mary?" asked Sadoc, curiously. "You have but seen him."

Mary looked bewildered.

"I do not know," she said.

"Was it because he looked at you, Mary?" I asked, my vision returning to me.

Mary turned to me in amazement.

"How did you know? Were you there? He looked at me, and I know not what came upon me. It seemed as if life were not so evil as I had thought, or men so wicked. It was as if he called me. I know not where I go, but I know I must follow."

She went out, and after a space the men went after her, but I lingered, hoping to see Jesus. But he came not forth. Other men were leaving the house, and after a time, seeing that Jesus must have gone out by another way, I too went. As I rose up to go, a dark man with a lowering face that held a tragedy came forth alone. I did not know him, but something in his face bit into my mind. He was muttering to himself, and as he passed I heard him say: "It was worth thirty pieces of silver. Thirty pieces of silver!"

I touched the arm of the next man.

"Who is that that has passed?" I asked. "There, walking behind Levi the publican."

"That? Oh, that is Judas Iscariot," said the man. "He, too, is a follower of Jesus."

IV

THE day after Simon's party, as soon as it was dawn, I went out to seek Jesus, but he was not in the town. Men told me that the villages could not contain the crowds that came to hear him, and that I should find him outside in the country where there was room. I went out, but the crowd was so great that I could not see him from its edge. I lingered, hoping that by some chance the people might go away and I might see Jesus alone. All around me men were disputing as to his healings and the number of devils he had cast out, some saying this and some that, and after a time I wearied of their talk and came away.

I met Sadoc coming out from the town, and he stopped. "Have you seen aught of Mary?" he asked. His foppery had dropped from him, and he was full of woe. I told him that I had not seen her.

"I thought she might be outside with Jesus," he said. "I have been to her house, but it is closed. They say she was last seen with Joanna, the wife of Chuza, and with Suzanna."

"But, Sadoc," I said, "these are women of repute. Is it likely that they will consort with such as Mary?"

"It is the fault of Jesus," he replied, bitterly. "He has confused them with talk of this kingdom of his, and now they follow him. What a kingdom! Outcasts and publicans mixed together with fishermen and the wives of respectable men!"

"John the Baptizer also preached the kingdom of God," I said.

"John went naked and starved himself," cried Sadoc. "None but the mad could believe in his teaching. But Jesus says he is going to establish a kingdom here in our midst and in our daily lives, and in truth he has begun, for he is plucking our houses about our ears."

"I have not heard his teaching of the kingdom, but men say he has wisdom," I replied.

"How could such as he come by wisdom?" said Sadoc. "He is the son of a carpenter, and a carpenter himself."

"Is wisdom denied to carpenters?" I asked; but Sadoc was angry, and said:

"I see that you, too, will soon be of his kingdom. They told me in the marketplace just now that Nicodemus has joined him. Nicodemus is old, but he is too serious. It is the fault of all Jews. The Romans are wiser. They live their

lives, and leave their gods to their priests. I wonder what Pilate will say when the talk of this kingdom comes to his ears?"

"I am sure you are mistaken, Sadoc. It cannot be what you say," I said.

"I tell you that everywhere in secret men are talking of the new kingdom. Go and see Nicodemus, if you do not believe me," said Sadoc, and he went away in wrath.

Now, Nicodemus was a Ruler amongst the Jews, and I had known him from my childhood. He was a quiet man, but fair-minded above all other men. He had no passion but for justice, and in his dealings with his fellows he was himself just to the bone. I determined that I would go to him.

By this time it was midday, and I found Nicodemus in his house, about to sit down to eat. He asked me to join him, and when food had been put before us I told him why I had come.

"Sadoc says you have become a follower of Jesus, and that he is preaching a kingdom not of the Romans," I said.

"Sadoc is a fool," said Nicodemus. "It is true that I have been to see Jesus, but it is not true that he preaches against Roman rule, or that I have become his disciple."

"What is this talk of his kingdom?" I asked.

"Sadoc says it is more dangerous than that preached by John."

"I have heard John preach," said Nicodemus. "He was a wild, unbalanced man. He preached repentance, and denounced all men. It was teaching, look you, fitted to make men think upon their sins, but not to govern their lives. Jesus is a greater than John."

"What, then, is this kingdom?" I asked.

Nicodemus pondered a moment.

"It is hard to explain," he said. "It has long been in the minds of men of our nation that one day God would rule over us in an earthly kingdom. Jesus is well learned in the Law, so he knows of that hope. But his doctrine is that that kingdom is here already."

"But where," I cried, "seeing the Romans rule all Judea?"

"I think he means that it is in men's hearts, and has nothing to do with their governors. But let me tell you of what he said to me," said Nicodemus. "I went to him by night, for indeed, it was the only way to see him alone, and I asked him of this kingdom, and he said no man could see the kingdom unless he was born again, and when I wondered, asking if a man could be born again when he was old, he said unless a man was

born of the Spirit he could never enter the kingdom."

"Then it is not a real kingdom?"

Nicodemus pondered again before he answered.

"Yes, it is real," he said at last, "but he seemed to think that what was meant by our Prophets was that if you change men's hearts you will also change their governments. He spoke out of an inner certainty, and with authority. When I questioned him as to how a man could be born of the Spirit, he said that when he spoke of what he knew, men would not accept his statements; and if they would not believe when he spoke of earthly things, how could they believe if he spoke of heavenly?"

"What did he mean by that?" I asked.

"His meaning, I think, was that if he tells men the way to enter the kingdom, and they won't believe him, how can he expect them to believe him if he tells of the mysteries of the Spirit? That, at least, was how I understood him. He has the root of the matter in him, and his teaching is certainly of God."

"And yet you have not become his follower?" I said.

"I cannot do as others have done, and throw up all to follow him. I have taken too many duties upon me," he answered.

"Well, Nicodemus," I said, as I rose up to go, "I have it in my mind that I may become a follower of Jesus. I go to seek him now, to ask of this kingdom." And Nicodemus answered sadly:

"You are young, and I am old. I do not say that if I were thy age, and not a Ruler of Israel, I would not do likewise. Go, and God be with you."

I had stayed long with Nicodemus, and when I went forth from his house it was towards evening. I went out of the city by the same way in which I had walked at dawn, but when I reached the place where the crowd had been gathered, there was no one there. But I did not return to the town, for I had a feeling that if I went on I should come upon Jesus. When I had gone forward some distance, I saw a group of men and some mules in the distance, and made for them. When I reached them I saw that Jesus was not one of them, and that they disputed together. A young man in silk raiment stood in the middle, and urged something upon some other men, who, rougher in manner and clad in coarser garments, withstood him. Some paces behind them stood two servants, holding three mules, one of which had saddle-cloths of finely-woven wool, and stirrups of silver.

"But I have come from far," said the young

man, and one of the others, whom later I knew to be Peter, answered:

"He has taught all day, and by now he is tired out. He has but this moment gone aside to rest."

The servants murmured that their master had come a day's journey to see the Prophet, and that one so rich should be honoured, and one of them beckoned to Peter and said in his ear:

"The Prophet will not like it if you keep him back. He comes to know what office he may hold in the kingdom."

Peter wavered, and one of his companions—John, I think—said, "We must not send them away. You know what he said."

Peter, undecided still, turned to me and asked me what I wanted.

"I have come to speak to Jesus, but I will go now, and come again if he is tired," I said; whereupon John said, "It will be better to show them the path." So Peter led the way up a steep hillside, and the young man went behind him with his servants and the mules close at his heels. I followed with John.

"We shall find him in the highest place, where he can see over all the earth," said John, as we climbed, and it was near the top that we came upon Jesus. By this time the sun was beginning to set, and a great peace lay upon the land. Jesus

sat gazing over the wide country that lay before him, but he turned when he heard our footsteps. Peter went up to him.

"Master, these two rich men have come to speak to you," he said. "John thought you would wish to see them."

"John was right. I would turn none away. What do they need?" asked Jesus.

The young man stepped forward, and with great courtesy knelt down.

"Master," he said, "I have come to ask you what I can do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus regarded him for a moment, and his eyes went to the men-servants and the mules, and he looked at them before he answered. Then he said:

"You have been brought up in the commandments of Moses. Keep these."

"I have observed them all," said the young man.

"There is one further," said Jesus. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"This, too, have I done," said the young man. "What else do I lack?"

For a moment there was silence, and then Jesus said, and his eyes searched the young man as he spoke:

"There is still one thing lacking. Go and sell

all that thou hast and give to the poor, and then come and follow me."

The young man rose to his feet, and stood silent, his eyes cast on the ground. The servants moved uneasily, and one of them scratched his head, as if the answer pleased him not. Jesus spoke again:

"How is it you say you love your neighbour as yourself? Is not your house full of goods, while around you your brothers, also sons of Abraham, are clad with dung and dying of hunger? Goeth there aught at all from out your house for them?"

The young man made no answer. He did not raise his eyes, and, after a moment, he turned aside. The servants turned also, and they all began to go slowly down the hill. Jesus watched them go. Then he said, and his face was tired and discouraged, and his eyes clouded:

"How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God. I tell you, Simon, that it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to come into the kingdom."

Simon was astonished.

"Who, then, can be saved if the rich cannot?" he asked.

"God is the Awakener of man. With him all is possible," said Jesus, and he turned to me.

"Good master——" I began, but he stopped me.

"Do not call me 'good.' No one is good but God," he said, and suddenly his eyes lit up, and he questioned:

"Did I not see you at Simon's yesterday? Why have you come?"

"I, too, would live," I said, and my eyes met his.

He watched me for a moment, and then he smiled. "The other would not believe, so he went away," he said.

"So will not I," I answered.

"What! Though you, too, have riches?" he said, and there was mirth in his eyes as if he mocked a little, even while he loved.

"All that I have is yours," I replied, and then he rose up and kissed me, and from that day he was my friend.

V

THESE things happened in the spring of the year. The winter had been long and hard. The land withered under a bitter wind that blew day after day, and men wondered if spring would ever come. Then suddenly the wind changed, and a soft, warm rain fell. The sun shone, the field flowers began to push up their heads, and the surfaces of the roadways, swept by the wind and washed by the rain, were clean and pleasant to walk upon. It was in such a time that Jesus set out on a journey through Galilee. He asked me to go with him, though he said I should see little of him.

"I have a work to do," he said, and he looked me straight in the face as his wont was. "I ask your help. I cannot give the message where men will not believe in it, but when I have those with me who trust me I can deliver it."

I told him I was proud to be of his company, and he thanked me.

We were a large party. Peter and John were both there, with Judas Iscariot and the other dis-

ciples. Nathaniel came too, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward with Suzanna who brought with them certain other women and provisions, which they carried on mules. On the first day we started at dawn, and walked all the morning. Joanna offered Jesus a mule to ride upon, but he would not have it, saying he loved to walk. So he walked too.

For a time that morning Peter and John both walked with me, and Peter spoke of Joanna and of how she had offered Jesus the mule.

"She could not see that it would not be meet for him to go among the poor like a rich man riding upon a mule. These rich women like to bring food upon their own beasts, and no one stops them, though it is not needful. For all men seek after Jesus, and are glad to receive him into their houses."

"Why, then, did he tell me that he could not give his message where men did not believe?" I asked.

"It was his relatives who would not believe," Peter answered with indignation. "We believed at once, and when he chose us they were angry. There was a day when they came wanting to shut him up as a madman, for they said he was out of his mind."

John said,

"They had known him from birth, and when the message came to him they did not understand. Perchance they were too familiar with him to see clearly. When a man thinks he knows his fellows all through, he falls into error. He forgets the mystery that is in everybody."

Peter answered him hastily, and as he walked he slashed at the grasses by the side of the road.

"You are making excuse where there is no excuse. They ought to have seen how great a Prophet he is. We saw it."

But John only smiled, and did not answer him back.

At noon we stopped high up on the hillside to eat our mid-day meal. Jesus went apart up into the mountain, and no man followed him. The women had given us food, and ridden on into the next village, and when we had eaten we lay in the shadow of a tall rock and rested.

The sun was hot, but there was a little breeze. The great plain lay spread out before us with its forests of oak, and its olive gardens, its vineyards, and corn-fields. In the distance were the hills of Samaria, and the high lands of Judah. The ragged, woolly sheep fed peacefully near by, and their shepherd did not disturb us. The other disciples wandered away, but Peter and John stayed, and Nathaniel. Judas Iscariot, too, sat near us,

but he did not join in our talk. His grave, dark face turned now and then to regard us, but for the most part he gazed on the land before him as if he brooded over some secret thought.

It was in this wise that I learnt much of Jesus from those who had been with him from the beginning. They did not all agree in what they told me. Nathaniel, whose friend Philip lived in the same town as Peter, told me of how Philip had brought him to Jesus.

"Peter and Philip were both there. It was near Jerusalem by the Jordan where John was baptizing," he began.

Peter would not let him finish, but interrupted, saying,

"He did not call me at Jerusalem, but at the lake when I was fishing."

"But you were with Philip at the Jordan too," said Nathaniel mildly.

"I had but gone to see John the Baptizer. It was after that that I was called," said Peter, and would have disputed the question, but John said,

"What does when or where matter, seeing that he has called us?" and Peter was silent, and allowed Nathaniel to go on.

"Philip told me to come and see a great Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, and I asked if any good could come out of a place like Nazareth."

"It is a dirty little village, and built in a hole," said Peter. "There are no new beautiful buildings in it as there are in our town, Bethsaida."

And John said,

"The hills around are wonderful. A man can find freedom there. But go on, Nathaniel. Tell us more."

"I went with Peter, and when we came to Jesus, he said he had seen me under the fig tree when Philip came for me. It could not have been with his bodily eyes, for he was a long way off. He has strange powers, but so has many a magician. I did not follow him for that. I followed because I loved him."

"Magicians are evil," said Peter. "They work by the power of the Devil. Jesus works only by the power of God. What you tell us is nothing compared to what I have seen him do. But see, the people are coming out from the villages. The women must have told them that Jesus is here."

We looked, and saw that from all quarters the people seemed to be coming towards our mountain.

"I must go and tell Jesus," said Peter, starting up, and he went away up the mountain to find him.

The people were yet a long way off, and after a time Nathaniel went on speaking of Jesus.

"What his powers are I care not," he said. "Though he is a great prophet, he loves the simple. He puts his thoughts in such a way that men cannot help remembering them. I am a simple man myself, and sometimes he has puzzled me, but when I have thought out his meaning, I can never forget it. It belongs to me then."

Judas Iscariot suddenly turned his earnest face to Nathaniel.

"I wish he would speak more plainly," he said. "The people do not understand these stories of his."

"The people are in need," answered Nathaniel gently. "I think they do understand, and they listen because he has something to say that means life to them."

"They do not understand when he speaks of the Kingdom. I have seen it," said Judas, and he rose up and went away.

"Does he never smile?" I asked, and Nathaniel replied:

"Judas seeks somewhat. I am sorry for him. I wonder if he will ever find it."

"I have a fear of him," said John. "He does not love men."

"Perhaps he loves causes better than men," said Nathaniel, and then we were silent and spoke no more, but lay and watched the people as they

flocked together in groups from the towns and villages. The shaggy, long-tailed sheep, that at noontide had been feeding quietly beside us, moved further off, and when the heat of the day had past, the mountainside was covered with people, and the sheep fed peacefully on the heights. All kinds and sorts of people had come. Dwellers in the desert, and rude-looking shepherds in sheepskin coats mingled with learned Rabbis clad in long dark robes. Women from the fields carrying their babies on their backs stood side by side with tradesmen from the towns, tanners, shoemakers, and needlemakers, potters, dyers, and smiths. There were ass-drivers and husbandmen, carpenters and masons, slaves and tax-gatherers. It seemed as if all the workers in the world had come together to hear the teaching of Jesus. When they saw him coming down the mountainside, and, from the high ground above them, make ready to speak to them, there was a noise of rustling of garments and stirring of feet as they all settled down in peace to listen.

It was a still, calm evening. On the far-off mountains the blue light of dusk was already falling. Across the wide plain the children were beginning to drive the cattle home, and from the empty villages thin grey smoke rose straight into the air.

Jesus began to speak, and there fell a great silence.

"I have a new thing to tell you," he said. "I who speak to you have been sent as a Messenger to you. God has chosen me as his servant to bring you good news."

His voice was clear, and every word could be heard to the uttermost edge of the crowd.

"You all know that to our ancestors it was said that a day would come when the God of Heaven himself would set up a kingdom amongst us that would never be destroyed. The Prophets have told you how in the day of the great kings there shall come one like the Son of Man, and there shall be given him dominion and glory and a kingdom. And the kingdom shall belong to the saints of the Most High, and in it all peoples, nations, and languages shall serve and obey God for ever. For the Kingdom of Heaven is an everlasting kingdom, and the ruler of it is the living God, who is steadfast for ever. This you have all heard, and in this hope you have lived. Is it not so?"

There was a murmur of assent, men saying one to another that all this they had heard read aloud on the Sabbath in the synagogues. Then they turned to listen again.

"The message I have been sent to give will not

be good news to the rich and the powerful. The princes and the governors, the captains and the judges, the treasurers and the counsellors, the sheriffs and all who rule over men, will not welcome it. For God has commanded me to tell you that his Kingdom is already here; yea, though you know it not, it is now in your midst."

There was a stir in the crowd, and the people moved like a wave of the sea, as men leant forward more eagerly to hear.

"The Kingdom of Heaven does not belong to those who rule over you. God has not sent me to the great ones of the earth, but he has told me to tell the good news to the poor, to all who labour and are weary, to sinners, and to all who suffer. He has sent me to you who are in slavery, and told me to set you free. He has sent me to comfort the broken-hearted, to open the eyes of the blind, and to give joy for mourning and beauty for ashes. God's Kingdom belongs to the poor and the gentle, to those who hunger and thirst after goodness, to the clean-minded, to those who mourn, and to the peacemakers. It is to these that God speaks."

He paused for a moment. Far off on the mountain a sheep baaed to its lamb, and the voice of a herd-child calling to the cattle came from the

plain below, but no other sound broke the stillness. Jesus went on speaking.

"God has commanded me that I deliver to you a new Commandment, the law of the Kingdom, love one another. No longer, as in the days of our ancestors, are men to say you must love your neighbour and hate your enemy, for the new Commandment is that you love your enemy also. For if you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? Do not all outcasts do this? And if you are only kind to them that are kind to you, what thanks do you deserve? That is not God's way. He is kind to the thankless and to the bad. Therefore, I say unto you, you must love your enemies, and show kindness to those who hate you, and if men injure you, you must not seek for revenge. Our ancestors ordained, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' but I say unto you, you must not even oppose wrong to wrong. You must act to other people as you would wish them to act to you. If you have injured a man, it does not help you to be sorry for it if he hurts you back again. If you have done a wrong, it does not make you haste to repair it if men do another wrong to you. I say unto you that wrong can never be appeased by wrong. It can be swallowed up and blotted out by kindness only. Therefore, you must be gentle to those who

are cruel to you, you must be merciful, you must not show contempt, you must not judge. You must forgive and be generous. And you must never despair, but go on being kind to all men, looking for no reward. These are the laws of the Kingdom of God."

Darkness had fallen now, and the land lay dim around us. There was scarce light enough to see the face of Jesus, but his voice rose clearly out of the darkness.

"To what shall I compare the power of love? It is like yeast that a woman hides in a measure of meal, and which spreads unseen till the whole measure is leavened. It is like mustard seed, small in itself, which shoots up and becomes so high that the wild birds find cover in it. It is like a farmer who sows his seed, and then watches first the blade push through the ground, and then the ear, and then the grain swelling and hardening. He knows not how it grows, for the earth seems to bring forth the fruit of herself. So is the growth of love.

"When all men love one another, God's kingdom will be fully here. In that day, as our prophets have said, nation will no more rise up against nation, neither shall men learn war any more. But they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into reaping hooks,

and war shall cease from amongst you. This, too, I say unto you. But you must first love one another."

He ceased. No man broke the silence. One by one the stars had begun to shine above us, and from behind the dark mountains the moon pushed her way into the high heavens.

Jesus spoke again.

"If you walk in God's paths, so long as the moon endureth there shall be an abundance of peace, for God himself will teach you of his ways. See. The night has now come, and it is time for you to be in your homes. Go, and peace be upon you."

There was a noise of stirring, as men gathered up their garments, and still in silence prepared to go their ways. Then, above the sound of the moving multitude, a woman's voice rose high and shrill, and the people paused to listen as she cried aloud.

"Oh, Teacher, I say unto you, Blessed be the womb that bore you, and the breasts that gave you suck."

Her words died on the air, and out of the night the voice of Jesus answered, clear and courteous,

"Nay, mistress, say rather, Blessed are those who hear the word of God and do it. Go, and God be with you."

There came again that noise of the scuffling of feet and the moving of a great multitude, and the people went to their homes in the darkness.

I am old now, and near my death. It is nigh three score years since I last heard him speak, but I still hear his voice, the beautiful voice reaching out of the darkness, "But I say unto you, Be kind and forgive. Seek no revenge, but love one another. Yea, never despairing, love even those who most bitterly wrong you."

VI

GALILEE is a small country, and during that tour we tramped all over it, and there was a great stir amongst the people. Once, when Jesus had gone into a lonely place to be quiet, a crowd of villagers sought him out and tried to prevent him from leaving them. But he said, "I must take the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, for that is why I was sent." And so he went on from village to village, and the crowds followed him.

At first it was only of the Kingdom of God that Jesus talked. Later, he told the people other things, but in Galilee he taught them daily of the Kingdom, and healed many of their sick. He had the gift of bestowing more life, though he used none of the ways of the wandering magicians who also healed disease. He drew no circles and recited no incantations, nor did he burn incense, or give the sick charms to eat against demons, but he put his hands on those who suffered, and the simple people said that a virtue went out from him, so that their pains and aches left them, and

peace and ease came back. His hands were strong and well-balanced, and comforted all whom they touched. I, too, have felt that virtue, for if by chance in walking he laid a hand on my shoulder, I felt more alive. I marked, too, that when he came amongst us, ordinary things seemed noteworthy, and common events had more of rarity. The field flowers were more beautiful, and the sky of a deeper blue when he was near. Life, when we saw it through his eyes, was full of divinity, and held nothing meaningless or dull.

The teaching was to me greater by far than the healings, for I felt that it freed men from burdens heavier than all their diseases. The Jewish religion laid a heavy yoke upon men. The Rabbis taught that our God, who was the one true God, had chosen our race to be his people, and an example to all other races. The other races were for ever shut out from the mercy of God, who would one day send a Deliverer to free our nation. We, the chosen, were commanded to do this small thing, or forbidden to do the other, on pain of God's displeasure, so that God himself seemed a taskmaster who demanded more than man had strength to render. I had often in my soul rebelled against the teaching, and seeing the hold the Romans had over the land, I felt that the Rabbis taught much of which they were ignorant.

The God of the Jews was a narrow and jealous God, whom a free man would be ashamed to worship. But the teaching of Jesus freed my mind. When he talked of God, no rebellion was possible, for he spoke of what he knew. He did not teach as the Rabbis did, as if the mystery of the knowledge of God was too great for an ignorant man to understand, nor did he talk of the care and ceremony with which God was to be approached. He spoke as if all men might know God if they had but the will. When he talked of God's love for man, and of what God asked from man, I felt he told us of what he himself had learnt, and of what I, too, could learn. It seemed that even the most simple could understand.

Seeing the power that Jesus had to add to the worth of the life of men I did not marvel when I saw that the people paid more heed to his healings than to his teachings, but I wondered when I saw that many of the disciples did so too. Some even of the Twelve when they spoke of his power liked more to tell of the demons who had been cast out, or of the lame who walked, and the blind who saw, than to spread the news that God only asked of men that they should love one another.

During that journey through Galilee, I made

acquaintance with all the followers of Jesus, and learnt to know their ways. There were great discussions amongst them, and sometimes, like a sudden storm, disputings would arise, and a clash of ideas, so that after a time I learnt to gauge the nature of each man by the meaning which he put into the teaching, and I saw that few, save Nathaniel, read it as I did.

When Jesus walked with us, all went well, for he was gay of heart, and had a way of linking men together. He brought with him a feeling of kindliness and understanding which made all things seem possible, so that as we talked, no man spoke evil of another, and when we discussed it was without floutings and carpings. We were his friends, and therefore friends one of another. His sympathy softened the hearts of men, so that they saw graces in their fellows to which they had been blind before. When he was there, all the diverse natures of his followers seemed to meet and blend, for he charmed and held even those most different from him. It may be that men love most readily their opposites, who have the gifts they lack, for how else could Jesus have attracted and held men like Matthew the publican (whom Simon said he had bewitched), or Judas Iscariot? Jesus loved freedom and gaiety, and looked only at the spirit. He had a mind swift as a kite, but

Matthew had a hard, dry mind, that paid great heed to the letter of the Law and to the Prophets. He clung to Jewish tradition, even though he had taken service under the Romans. He was slow-minded, and chewed his opinions as a cow chews the cud.

Judas Iscariot, too, was of a nature different from that of Jesus. He was a Judean, and the other disciples were of Galilee, which caused some jealousy, for the Judeans are of a harder, shrewder make than the simple Galileans. Judas was a good manager, and not careless about goods as the others were, spending in one day all that they had, and never looking to the future. He planned all out, and allotted to each man his share. He did not heed if any wasted his substance and asked for more. He would not give it, thinking that misfortune must follow the improvident. And yet Judas had great thoughts, and when he talked, he held men's minds. He did not often speak to us, but sometimes when Jesus was there, Judas (as if he felt Jesus was the only one who understood) would begin and would talk for long. He did not share his thoughts or look for those of other men as Jesus did. Judas gave out his mind as if it mattered not to him whether the listeners agreed or not. He did not want to mingle the thoughts of others with his own. He was satis-

fied with his own mind, and had no wish to change it. There were rumours that his father had been in the service of the Romans, and that he himself had been a page in their courts, but I never learnt the truth of these. If it were true he had seen much evil amongst our conquerers, for he hated them and looked for a day when he as a Jew would dominate over them and force his righteousness upon the world. Judas never doubted of the righteousness of the Jews or of his own, and, indeed, he was righteous in that he seldom thought of his own comfort. Yet, when I heard him talk I felt that to gain his end he would spare neither himself nor others, but would run his course as a mad dog does, looking neither to right nor to left.

Peter sometimes spoke hastily to Judas, for Peter was of a hasty nature, and, like a child, he spoke his mind if he was angry. Like a child, too, he changed his mind from day to day, loving and hating as a child does in gusts, and changing his opinions as his feelings changed. Peter was not clever like Judas, and grew restive when matters above his understanding were talked of. He had a blustering way with him, but I think that he blustered because he was uncertain of himself, as you may see one who has no self-confidence assert his power unduly as if to reassure himself.

Peter's assertion was the outer side of his nature. On the inner was his diffidence. Jesus could calm him by a look. He often kept Peter's temper for him when he was on the edge of an outbreak, and Peter showed his gratitude like a dog. He followed Jesus blindly, and was jealous of others who came near him.

John, too, gentle and dreamy and loving, was jealous when the flood of talk came on Judas, and Jesus listened. John's mind was not a clear one, and he was torn between stronger minds like those of Peter and Judas. For Peter, when he held an opinion, held it with vehemence, and would have all men hold it too, while Judas was so set on his own views that he never saw when others differed, and so, by his ignoring of them, made simple kindly souls like John feel as if they had ceased to exist. I have seen John angry when Judas in his talk ignored even Jesus; but Jesus was not angry, but watched Judas with interest, listening while he spoke of the evils of the Roman system and of how things ought to be.

The women of the party were not inclined to dispute, and, indeed, we saw little of them, for they occupied themselves with serving. But sometimes Mary of Magdala, who, having been a harlot, was accustomed to talk to men, came and talked with us. I mind me that on one of these

days there was a sharp discussion amongst the disciples. It was the first time that I had seen Mary since our start. Jesus had gone aside up the mountain to pray, and we waited in the shadow of an oak grove till he should return and we start again. I sat on the edge of the grove somewhat apart, and when I saw a woman coming I did not at first see that it was Mary, for she was dressed like a woman of the people in a coarse blue garment. Her hair was plainly braided, and there was no paint on her face. She was beautiful still, but the change was so great that for a moment I stood aghast, and Mary laughed.

"You see I am no longer clad like a King's daughter," she said.

"But your clothes were beautiful, Mary," I answered with somewhat of regret.

"Yes; but their beauty was branded. Some day I shall wear as beautiful, but till the Kingdom comes I wear this," and she touched her coarse garment.

"Is not the Kingdom here already?" I asked.

"Not for me," she answered sadly, so that I asked hastily,

"Are you not happy, Mary?"

"How can I be happy till my soul is clean? My tears have but washed the paint from my face," she replied.

Some of the others seeing us talking had drawn near, for Mary was like wine to men and they still sought her. Even now, when she no longer wished to rouse their bodily desires, she stirred and excited their minds, and till her death she held them.

Peter, hearing the sadness in her voice, said in his hasty way with something of self-importance in his tone,

"Men do not condemn you, Mary."

Whereupon Mary, with a flash of her old temper, answered,

"It matters not to me whether men condemn me or not. What sins I committed they shared. I know men too well to value their judgment."

"Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but to save it," said John.

"Jesus did not condemn me," said Mary. "I condemn myself. My punishment for having lived a dirty life is to see the beauty of a clean one, and he showed me that. It is enough."

Suddenly Judas Iscariot spoke, sweeping the other talk aside, as if such personal things mattered naught.

"Why did you say the Kingdom was here?" he asked me, and I, somewhat surprised, said,

"Did not Jesus say so?"

"Jesus knows well that the Kingdom cannot

be established so easily. There is too much power on the side of the oppressors."

"But Judas, Jesus said nothing of oppressors," said Nathaniel.

"Jesus knows the time is not ripe yet, though it soon may be. See how the people follow him," said Judas darkly.

"I don't know what you mean," said Peter.

"A wise man's eyes are in his head, while a fool walketh without eyes," answered Judas. "The oppression in Galilee is not so heavy as in Judea."

"I suppose you mean me," Peter retorted hotly. "I know I am an ignorant man, but I'm not such a fool as you think. You speak of the Romans. You are a Judean. You think too much of the Romans. We do not bother about them in Galilee."

"Is it wise to mention names?" Judas replied. "When I hear it said that the Kingdom is here already, I marvel if men know aught of the condition of this country or how we must work to better it. If the Judeans follow as these Galileans do, the Kingdom may soon be here. But there must be no division between Judean and Galilean. We want a plan. It would be madness and folly to try to establish the Kingdom without unity."

"But that is what Jesus always teaches," cried John.

"Jesus is wise. He knows that to every purpose there is time and judgment," said Judas.

"What purpose do you speak of?" asked Nathaniel. Mary, who had been watching Judas, cried out,

"He speaks of the Romans. He wants to upset their rule."

"Can God reign in Judea if the Romans are still there?" asked Judas; and we all stood silent, wondering at the meaning he put into the teaching. At last, I, seeing that division might come upon us, said,

"Jesus spoke of a different Kingdom. He does not think of rebellion."

"It is a kingdom of the heart, a heavenly kingdom," said Nathaniel.

"But it is to be established on earth according to the prophecies," said Matthew. And Peter, hesitating, said, as if he spoke to himself,

"He said the Kingdom did not belong to those who rule over us."

"He said the Rulers and Governors would not welcome it," Judas answered him.

"God could reign in Galilee," said John.

"But not in Judea," cried Judas. "The Romans must be driven forth if God is to rule over Israel. It has long been in my mind, and Jesus

is coming to see it too. Mark the last time I talked to him. One day he will do it."

"I am sure you misread him, Judas," said Nathaniel.

"Why else do the people follow?" said Judas, and then Mary, springing from the ground, cried out,

"Here is Jesus himself. Let us ask him."

Jesus was coming down the mountainside, and we all went out to meet him. When he was near, Peter hurried a pace or two in advance and burst into speech.

"Master! Judas would rid us of all oppressors."

There was a tranquillity on the face of Jesus and a light in his eyes as if he had looked upon things unseen. He turned to Judas, "What oppressors?" he asked, and sat down on a big stone to hear.

"The oppressors of our nation," said Judas. "You have seen the oppression of the poor and the violent perverting of justice and judgment in the province. The oppressors must be driven forth if the Kingdom is to be established. Seeing the power you have over the people, I have told them you will end the oppression."

"By driving forth the oppressors?" asked Jesus.

"Yes," cried Judas. "By thrusting them into

the sea. By breaking their Empire in pieces, and humbling them so that they whisper out of the dust."

When Judas finished, Jesus rose and from the height on which we stood, he looked over the plain below with all its signs of the works of men, its villages and its towns, its crops and woods, and far in the distance the tiny ships on the blue line of the sea. He seemed to withdraw into himself as if to gather strength, and then he turned again to Judas, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels.

"Will that end oppression?" he asked, and waited for a reply.

None came, for with the question we all, even Judas, fell silent, and after a space Jesus turned him about, and we started again on our journey.

VII

SOMEWHERE near Rameh, on our way to the coast, we left the hill-tracks that led from village to village, and struck into the great west road, the Way of the Sea, that runs from Damascus to the Roman seaport of Ptolemais. Matthew knew this road well, for its way lay round the north end of the lake, and at Capernaum where it forked, one branch running north and the other south to join the great road to the east, he had sat at its custom house gathering the tolls which the Romans levied for its upkeep on all the travellers who used it. Jesus knew it too, for it passed some miles north of Nazareth, where he had spent his boyhood, but he knew the other road that ran across Galilee better. This, the great road of the East, ran south of Nazareth nearer the village and linked the sea coast with the Greek cities and with Arabia.

As we walked down the hillside to join the Via Maris, there was much talk amongst us of these and of other roads which the Romans had paved; for at one time or another we had all travelled along them, and there is no talk so engrossing as

the talk of roads. Jesus told us of how as a boy, when he had had a day's freedom from work, he had loved to walk the miles that lay between Nazareth and the great road to the East, merely to sit by the roadside and watch the traffic that passed along it. He told of the caravans bearing iron and tin that went from the sea to Arabia, and of the wild herdsmen who passed from Arabia to the sea, driving flocks of sheep, of rams, and of goats. He spoke of the chariots and the merchants that went to and fro, and of the sound of the trampling of the legions as they marched on their way from Rome to the Greek cities and the far-off frontiers of the Empire.

"You may see in a day's walk the might of all the kingdoms of this world pass along it," he said.

We reached the road, and stopped for a moment to watch in the distance the dust of an approaching caravan.

"They go to Damascus," said Jesus, and Matthew answered,

"The Romans have made all travel easy. I always say that from Damascus you may now reach Baghdad and the Indies as easily as a man may go from Jerusalem to Jericho."

"Easier! There are fewer thieves," cried Peter, with a glance at Judas Iscariot, but Jesus, as if he put the challenge aside, said,

"The road to Damascus is broad, but from Jerusalem to Jericho is a dangerous way, where thieves may lurk."

He led the way into the division of the road reserved for foot passengers, and we walked on towards the cloud of dust with dim forms looming in it that marked the caravan.

When we came up to it, we stood on the roadside to watch it pass. The evil-faced camels swayed on their way, loaded with chests bound with cords and with bales shipped from the ports of Tarshish to the quays of Ptolemais. The turbans of the men were bound with ropes of hair, and their open coats showed their brown, hairy chests. One trudged in the dust, while another ran forward with cries to strike an unruly beast on the flank. The dust of the road lay thick upon men and camels. Once and again a whiff of sweet scent came from the loads as if the boxes still held the spices with which they had travelled to Ptolemais or to Tyre. Then the scent died away, the smell of dust, and of sweat, of men, and of camels prevailed, and with shouts from the drivers and the soft thud of the pads of the camels, the caravan passed on to the East.

Jesus watched it grow small in the distance.

"Such sights held me as a boy, and they still hold me," he said. "What treasure has passed

along this road for Damascus or the fairs of Tyre. Emeralds and wheat, honey and oil and balm, fine linen and embroidered goods, iron, cassia and calamus, white wool, ivory and ebony," he quoted as if he loved the beauty of the words.

"Men from Assyria, Babylon, and Nineveh, too, have walked on this road."

"The Romans now walk in their places," said Judas bitterly.

"That caravan will cross the Jordan by the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob," said Matthew. "Often after harvest when the wheat is being moved, the camels pass all night long, never ceasing."

We went on towards the sea, and descended to the coast plain to a village where the women, who had gone on before us, had prepared places for us to sleep. Here, at the gate, the head-man, with most of the villagers, was waiting to receive Jesus. It was a poor village of poor houses, and the head-man himself was in poverty. His clothing was worn, and his eyes had an anxious look as if to feed so many guests would be a burden. He led the way into his house, and his wife came forward to welcome us.

"May a blessing rest upon this house," said Jesus.

"May a blessing rest upon you. You are wel-

come, sir," said the woman. The head-man showed us where to sit, and his wife began to prepare food to set before us. It was the poor house of a hard-working family. The few beasts in the stalls were thin, and there was not much fodder piled against the wall. The clothing of the woman was old, and on her patient face there were lines of suffering and of care. The meal which she offered to us generously was poor, too, as if the corn-bins did not hold much grain. Jesus asked her if she had children, and she said they were with the sheep, and had not yet come in. The land was poor here, and they had sometimes to go far for pasture. They would be back by nightfall.

Before the meal was over there was a commotion at the door, and two tall lads and a small, bright-eyed girl came in, driving some sheep before them.

"Here are the children," said their mother, hastening forward to greet them and to drive the sheep into the pen. There were not many sheep, and the guests all helped to pen them, so this job was soon done, the woman making excuses to Jesus for the noise. Then she took their empty scrips from the children, and giving them each a piece of bread, set them down in a corner and told them to keep quiet. The boys seeing Jesus

in the place of honour sat still and watched him as they ate their supper, but the girl, after one or two hesitating looks, gradually edged nearer and nearer until at last she leant against Jesus, pressing her small body close to his as she munched her bread. The mother would have sent her away.

"You must not trouble the guests. I am afraid she will weary you, sir," she said, but Jesus put his arm round the child and said,

"Do not send her away. Let her stay with me. It is to the childlike that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs."

When we had finished our food, the head-man said to Jesus,

"You are a Prophet, sir, and we would hear your message. Many of our friends have gone to hear you, but we are poor and cannot often find time to leave our work."

So Jesus taught them. We were all there, and the women too, and the friends of the head-man and many of the villagers. It was a large room and there was space for all. Jesus talked to the man and woman of the house, and we listened.

"Once upon a time," he began, "there was a rich man, and his land was very fertile. It was so fertile that he began to ask himself, 'What shall I do? I have so many crops that I have no place to store them.' He thought for a while, and then

he said, 'I know what I will do. I will pull down these old barns, and in their place I will build fine new ones, large enough to store all my grain. I will put all my other spare goods in them. When I have done this, I shall have plenty of good things stored by for years to come, and I will take my ease. I will eat and drink and enjoy myself.' But that night God spoke to that rich man and said,

" 'You fool! This very night I am going to take away your soul, and who will then have all these goods that you have laid by?' "

Jesus stopped for a moment, and his eyes met the anxious eyes of the man, who was regarding him with a puzzled look.

"So it will always be with those who lay by wealth for themselves, and who do not seek to add to God's glory by doing good work," he said. "That is why I say to you, do not be anxious about your life here, about what you can get to eat, nor yet about your body, what you are to wear. Can any of us by mere anxiety prolong his life for one moment? So if you cannot do even this smallest thing, why be anxious about other things? God is your Father, and he gave you life. Is not life a greater gift than food, and your body more wonderful than its clothes? Your Father knows that

you need all these things. Will he not give them also to you?"

The anxiety in the man's eyes had given place to interest. He sighed as if in relief and listened eagerly as Jesus went on.

"Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap. They have neither storehouses nor barns, and yet God feeds them. Are you not as precious to God as the birds are? Think of the wild lilies and how they grow. They do not toil or spin, and yet I tell you that Solomon in all his glory was never robed with beauty like theirs."

His eyes lingered with tenderness on the patient face of the woman, and he drew the little girl still closer as he said,

"If God so clothe the field flowers which are living to-day and to-morrow will be burnt up in your oven, will he not also clothe you, O woman of little faith?"

The eyes of the woman filled with tears, but she did not answer.

"If this child here asked you for a loaf, would you give her a stone? If she asked a fish, would you give her a snake? If you, then, being imperfect, wish to give her good gifts, will not God, who is all good, give you help when you ask it?"

The woman wiped the tears from her eyes with a corner of her ragged veil, but she still did not

speak. The two boys had drawn near, and now leant against Jesus. The small girl had climbed to his lap, and was fast asleep with her head on his shoulder. Jesus went on,

"As we came by the Way of the Sea to-day, we met a caravan going with treasure to Damascus. Daily you see them pass; for after all these things do the nations seek. But I say unto you that God does not wish you to store up treasure on earth, for where you have your treasure your heart will be also, and you will be too anxious about it to think of God. For the moth eats all treasure here, and rust bites into it. Thieves, too, break in and steal it. What think you? If you love the things of this world will not your heart be with them, while if you love the things God loves will not your heart be with God? Can any man serve two masters? Will he not love one and hate the other? You cannot serve both God and riches."

The man of the house straightened his shoulders as if he cast a weight from his back. He looked at his wife, and she met his eyes with a question in hers. It was as if hope had entered their hearts.

Jesus went on speaking to them.

"When you welcomed me to-day you welcomed God who has sent me as his messenger. Therefore, it is in God's name that I tell you that your Father

cares for you. God's message is, 'Come unto me all you who toil and bear burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn to be gentle and lowly minded. Walk in the good way, and you shall find rest for your souls.' For God's yoke is easy, and burdens borne for him feel light."

He ceased speaking. The small girl roused herself, and half-lifting her head from his shoulder spoke in a sleepy voice.

"Tell me more about the ravens," she commanded, and at once fell asleep again. We all laughed, and Jesus, holding the child with care, rose from his seat.

"It is time for her to be in bed," he said, and put her into her mother's arms, and the woman, the lines smoothed from her face, and a new peace in her eyes, took the child and bore her away. And then we all went to our rest.

VIII

ON our way to Tyre we turned aside and walked across the plain of Ptolemais to see that city. There was a throng round the gate. A camel caravan crowded up the great door, and some horsemen waited impatiently outside, soothing their frightened horses, while the camels, who make haste for no man, stepped slowly forth, bobbing their heads. It was some time before all was clear, and we could pay our tolls and pass through the small gate into the city. This sea-town was full of foreigners, and speech with them was difficult, for though Jesus and some others of us knew Greek, we did not speak it as our mother tongue. The settled inhabitants were too busy to listen to teaching, and the sailors were full of their work, and did not wish to hear. Some of them knew no Greek, but spoke barbarous tongues which we had never heard before, so Jesus did not try to talk to them, but went about with us to see the sights.

The centre place of the city was packed with thousands of camels and tens of thousands of

sheep. The air was filled with the complaints of the sheep and the cries of the men who shepherded them. Near the shops rows of the camels lay in the dust, and we watched while their doubled back knee joints were bound round with string to keep them from rising till men had tied on their packs the bales brought from the warehouses. When a camel was loaded its knee was unbound and the great beast rose rocking under its load. Then another was led up and forced to kneel and take its place.

There were many signs of the Roman power in Ptolemais. The streets were paved, a gang of slaves, working under the lash of a Roman foreman, was laying out a new road, and as we went out of the market-place to the sea we met a squad of soldiers marching in helmets and breastplates and commanded by a hard-faced centurion. We passed by the temple to Jupiter, built in the Greek style, and Jesus stopped to watch the worshippers of this god as they passed in and out of the portico. Judas Iscariot's face wore a bitter look when he saw the tranquillity of Jesus before this heathen temple.

"They have worshipped false gods here ever since Alexander the Greek took this city. It has never been a city of the Jews," he said, for he knew much history.

Jesus did not answer, but Matthew made reply.

"The Canaanites worshipped false gods too. Pity was we did not take the city from them when Pharaoh released us after taking us captive to work for him in Egypt. If Moses had lived . . ."

Judas cut him short.

"Moses sinned, and his work failed. It is always so with our leaders. They do not complete the work. They left this coast in the hands of foreigners, and through their open seaports all manner of abominations have come. Now the Romans are paving ways over all our land for their wickedness to walk on. Soon we shall cease to be a nation."

No one answered, for Judas's denunciations tired the mind, and we wanted to watch the sights. We walked on in silence till we reached the quays.

Here were more signs of the strength of the Romans. A galley was clearing the harbour, and we could hear the clank of the oars as the chained prisoners strained their way out to sea. Many ships lay by the quay-side, loading and unloading. On one quay an elephant stacked balks of timber that had come from Lebanon, while on another crates of wild beasts, hyænas and lions from the Arabian desert, waited to be hoisted into a ship, the miserable creatures roaring in their narrow cages on their way to the games in Rome.

The business and bustle all around, and the many strange sights of the city stirred the blood of the disciples. Peter's eyes shone, and he was excited as he went from ship to ship to see their tackle and with what each was loading, and the others followed him. But Jesus stood before the poor caged beasts, and looked at them with compassion. His face was sad, and after a time he turned and led the way from the quays to where, by steps, we could reach the beach. I alone followed, and we walked along the sand in the direction of Tyre. When we had got some way from Ptolemais, so that its roofs only showed in the distance, with Mount Carmel behind them, we sat down on the sand-hills to wait for the others. The afternoon breeze had begun to blow up from the sea. Behind us a clump of palms rattled their branches together in the wind as if they clapped their hands, and in front the strong waves broke in long lines of foam on the shore. After the turmoil of the city there was soothing in the roar of the sea and the harsh rattle of the palms.

Jesus sat watching it all. Once he said, half to me, half to himself,

"God is holy in all his works," and then he fell silent again.

So we sat and spoke no more until the others came up weary of sight-seeing, but excited still

with all they had seen. Jesus told them to rest, for we had a long walk before us. We were to sleep in a village somewhat short of Tyre that night, so they threw themselves down on the sandhills and took out bread and ate.

Peter talked of the tall houses of Tyre that we should see on the morrow, and of all the wonders they had seen that day, and Jesus asked Judas if he knew the histories of Ptolemais and of Tyre. And so, as we lay there on the sand-hills, Judas told of the glories these cities had seen, and of the Kings who had ruled over them. He told of how Cleopatra had come up from Egypt with her litters and her chariots and horsemen to be married to Alexander Balas in Ptolemais with great pomp, as is the manner of kings; and of how this same Alexander had robed Jonathan Maccabeus with purple in the centre place of the city, giving him great honour so that his enemies fled from before him.

"In the very same market-place where we have but now seen the camels," said Judas. And then he told of the death of Jonathan, treacherously slain by King Tryphon within the walls of Ptolemais.

"Jonathan was brother of Judas, who made a treaty with Rome, and so brought the present misery upon us," said Judas.

"Should we have been a kingdom now if he had conquered without the Roman help?" asked Peter, who forgot the enmity he had for Judas, as he listened to his talk.

"Our rulers have always betrayed us," answered Judas. "God gave us this land, but these foreign kings made it their battlefield, and our rulers sought their friendship. What are we even now but a bridge between nations? These dogs of foreigners walk over us as if we did not count!"

"But we have risen against them," cried Peter. "The Galileans have always fought, looking for a Deliverer."

"We Jews always think each new rising will bring forth a Messiah," said Nathaniel.

"There have been Messiahs in plenty, but they have not freed us," said Judas.

"Shall we ever be free?" Peter persisted.

"How can we endure being governed by strangers?" Judas asked, and Matthew replied,

"It is our own fault that the Romans hold the power they do. We do not govern as well as they."

"It is our rulers, I tell you," said Judas. "Even now the High Priest is a friend to Pilate. I know. Do I not come from Judea? Pilate would like us to follow the custom of the Romans, who make their Emperors gods and worship them. And

they do not govern as well as you say, Matthew. Look at these things!" And he went on to tell of how the conquerors had plundered the poor, robbing them of all they had, until no man was secure and the whole land was overrun with thieves and rebels. And Simon and Jude, who were shepherds and had fed their flocks on the hills of Galilee before they followed Jesus, joined in the talk, and told of how men had stolen their sheep, and of how they had to take refuge in the caves to hide from the robbers. These things we all knew, and Peter grew weary of listening, and urged Judas to tell more tales, and so Judas told of Alexander the Greek and how he had besieged Tyre, and of the mole which he had built into the sea to bring his engines of war against the walls of the city, which mole was now a causeway, having silted up with sand, so that men walked dry shod over it. Then he told of wars with the Egyptians and the Arabians and with men from the north, until there seemed no end to the conquerors of our nation. Suddenly Judas slacked in his talk, and turned to Jesus and said, and his dark eyes glowed with the fire that was in him,

"Master, will you not give us the kingdom?"

Jesus bent his eyes on Judas, and his face was kind but wistful as he answered.

"I cannot give any man the kingdom, Judas. He must take it for himself."

Peter burst in excitedly.

"When we have taken it who shall rule over us? What place shall we have? Shall we do great deeds like these kings?"

"You shall do greater deeds than these," said Jesus.

"What deeds?" cried Peter, and the others moved nearer to hear too.

"You could not understand if I told you now," said Jesus, tranquilly.

"Is it something hidden?" Peter asked in a low voice, looking at the other disciples.

"I have no secrets," said Jesus. And then he laughed and, teasing Peter, said,

"When you light a lamp, Peter, do you put a corn measure over it? Or hide it under the bed? Do not be afraid. Truth cannot be kept hidden. What I teach you in the dark say again in the light, and what I whisper in your ear shout from the housetops."

"Then why will you not tell us now?" said Peter.

"Your mind is full of other things, and you would not have ears to hear. Take care how you listen when you are not in a mood to understand."

Peter went on urging him to tell, but Jesus

shook his head and refused to answer. At last he said,

"It is not good to let your mind waver between Yea and Nay," and then he rose, and shaking the sand from his clothing, said: "Come, it is time to be going if we are to reach shelter before nightfall."

Peter followed him silently, puzzling over his meaning. Judas walked with me, but he was silent too, his face dark and gloomy. Once he muttered to himself, "Playing with children and with Peter will not give us the Kingdom."

It was late when we reached the village in which we were to sleep, and we were all tired out and footsore. Jesus told us to tell no one we had come, so that we could go straightway into the house and rest. He himself had had little to eat all day, and when he came into the lighted room, I saw that he was covered with the dust of the road, and that his face was weary.

The woman of the house greeted us and offered water to wash, and then she said in apology to Jesus, for she saw how tired he was,

"There is a woman here, a Greek, a native of this place. She has been waiting to see you, sir."

I was about to ask him not to see her now, when the Greek woman came swiftly out of the shadow where she had been sitting, and knelt before Jesus.

She was a young woman and in great distress. Her face was white with anxiety as she looked up at him.

"Sir," she said, "I hear you are a Prophet, and have the gift of healing. My daughter is ill. I entreat you to come and cure her."

For a moment Jesus hesitated (and indeed he was very tired), and seeing this the woman cried out like a child,

"Oh, sir, I forgot that you are a Jew, and that the Jews think they alone are children of God, and look upon all Greeks as dogs."

And in an agony of disappointment she bowed her head over the feet of Jesus, holding them with her hands.

There was a smile in the eyes of Jesus, but his voice was grave as he answered,

"Do you think it fair to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs?"

The woman raised her head. Her bright eyes gleamed with sudden mirth through the tears that brimmed their lids, and she spoke swiftly,

"No, sir, but the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs"; and then the tears overflowed and ran down her cheeks, and she bowed herself together to hide them.

Jesus touched her on the shoulder.

"You are a witty woman. Of course I will

come and heal your daughter," he said, and the woman as if she scarcely believed she heard aright rose to her feet and, dashing the tears from her eyes, led him away.

IX

IT was under the cedars of Lebanon, where Hermon looks down on the sources of the Jordan, that Jesus told us of the great deeds he asked from his followers.

We had left the racket of the coast towns far behind us. The people from the villages round Tyre and Sidon who had followed Jesus for days had said farewell with sorrow when we came to the high lands of Naphtali, where the bad road runs from the coast to Damascus. The country was disturbed, and in the rugged mountains north of Dan, where the cold is always at home, there were robbers; so now that the crops were ripening it was not safe to leave them unguarded. It had been lonely on the road when the villages left us. Caravans did not often use this way, and we were the only travellers. At first, some of the disciples carried with them the mood which they had caught in the cities, but slowly as we walked the keen air and the freedom of the wide views around had restored them to another mind. Peter had ceased to talk of the sights he had seen in Tyre, of the tall

houses crowded together on its island site, of the mole, and of what sort the engines of war were which Alexander had used. Gossip of the doings of kings dropped from him as the influences of the high moor took possession of him, and he had fallen into silence.

We had skirted the new town of Cæsarea Philippi which Philip had built, passing the grotto where the Greeks worshipped their god Pan. We had seen on a hill spur the white marble temple which Herod the Great had set up for the worship of Augustus. And then we had climbed to the cedar forest.

There was absolute stillness here. The cedars spread their boughs in layer on layer of green above us, the ground was thick with orange-brown needles, and the hot sun brought out the keen smell of resin. Looking down through the scaled trunks of the trees, we could see the marsh lands and floods where the waters of Hermon fell into the valley.

We had a great talk there. Judas Iscariot began it. Jesus, in his teaching of the kingdom, had told the people near Tyre of how they must strive after good and never despair, and in his last talk he had spoken of the patience of God and of how he helped men by ordering their lives so that they had to learn their lesson or perish. Then, to cheer

them, he had told a parable of a barren fig tree, of how God, who is our father and the gardener of the soul, had seen that the fig tree brought forth no fruit, and of how he had dug round it, and dunged it, and pruned it, and at last seeing it still brought forth no fruit, he had ordered as its last chance that it should be cut down.

Peter and the fishermen who knew nothing of gardening, had questioned the meaning of Jesus. Judas too who had lived mostly in Jerusalem, was ignorant of the nature of trees. But the people understood, and an old husbandman in the crowd, whose alert eyes were all wrinkled round with much working in the sun, had cried aloud in scorn of the ignorance of men who knew not the ways of fig trees.

"The Rabbi is right. It is the only way. It would grow again. Every gardener knows that the fig fruits only on new wood."

This had stuck in the mind of Judas, and now, lying under the cedars, he said to Jesus, and there was a shade of blame in his voice,

"Why do you always teach the people in parables?"

And Jesus, smiling, replied:

"Shall I answer by telling you another parable?"

So he told us:

"There was a certain man who had to travel to a far country. Before he went he called his servants together, and put them in charge of his property. He judged the capacity of each man, and gave him what he thought he could manage. To one he gave control over goods to the value of five talents, to another to the value of two, and to a third one; and straightway he went on his journey. He was away for a long time, and when he came back he asked his servants to give in their reckoning. And the first came and showed him ten talents, saying,

" 'Lord, behold you gave me five talents, and I have made them into ten.'

"And his lord said,

" 'Well done. You have been faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many.'

"Then he that had received two talents came with shame, and showed that his hands were empty in that he had devoured his talents with harlots and flute-women, and him the lord blamed. But the third, who had received the one talent, came and showed it him untouched as he had received it, and he said,

" 'Lord, I knew that you were a hard man who would reap what you had not sown, and gather where you had not threshed, and I was afraid lest I should make a bad use of the talent or lose it.

So I hid it in the ground, and, lo, there you have what is yours.'

"And his lord was very angry, and said,

" 'You wicked and lazy servant! You knew I reap where I have not sown, and gather what I have not threshed. How dare you waste the talent? At least you might have lent it to a banker, when it would have made some growth.' And he commanded him to be cast out."

Jesus stopped. Judas, who had listened with a half-frown on his face, said nothing, and Jesus, watching him, smiled and said,

"Well, Judas, have I justified myself?"

Judas, as if half-reluctantly, smiled too.

"What is your meaning?" he asked.

"That men must learn to use their powers. To those who try to have understanding more will be given, while from those who do not try, even what understanding they have will be taken away."

This did not please Peter. He grumbled as if he felt cheated, saying men could not help their minds, and that all were not born clever. But Jesus answered him,

"It is God's will to give you the kingdom, but if you have not kept the little, who will give you the great? It is the spirit that teaches. Begin therefore with little things, and seek from small to wax great."

Judas said,

"Men will never use their minds. They prefer repose."

And Jesus cried out,

"Do you think I am here to give repose to the world? I tell you no, but to cause division. I am here, not to cast peace but a sword on the earth. I came to kindle men's souls and to set the world on fire."

His face was radiant and his eyes shining.

"I tell you that now the kingdom is being preached, men everywhere are forcing their way into it. It is God's will that men should have life and have it in greater fullness. Think you this will not cause division? If a man seek the kingdom, his enemies shall be those of his own household, and even his old familiar friends, in whom he trusted, will turn against him. But I am here to teach men to be lawgivers to themselves, and he who is daunted by any man is not worthy of me."

His passion woke passion in every man of us. It was as if a fire lit up in our souls and ran through our veins. Judas's eyes burned in his head, and Peter cried out,

"Master, tell us of the great deeds you said we should do."

Jesus looked at him and then at Judas, and a

cloud came over the brightness of his face. The passion died out of his eyes, and there was a question in them as though he feared misunderstanding. He seemed to withdraw into himself seeking strength greater than his own, and when at last he spoke, it was slowly as a man seeks for words to express a thing too great for words.

"All over the world, Princes oppress their subjects, and the very men whom they enslave call them Benefactors. The great exercise dominion over those who are weak, and everywhere men seek after power. But amongst you it shall not be so. For in the kingdom of Heaven, who ever wishes to be great must serve, and he who strives to hold high place must be a servant."

"Then there is to be no kingdom," Peter called out in dismay.

Jesus turned to him.

"Do not judge by appearances, Peter. Judge justly. The glory of the princes of this world is mean and poor before the glory God shows to those who love him. Look at the works of men and your heart will dwindle. Did any man ever yet look at the works of God and feel a less man because of them? It is because men seek the honours that come from men that they do not see the glory that comes from God. For God's glory is love and truth, and he gives us gift after gift of love.

Yet God, who is the giver of all, is the servant of all."

Peter was silent. Judas Iscariot sat with his head bowed down.

But Nathaniel said,

"Master, teach us to see."

And Jesus answered,

"Is not the light of the body the eye? When your eye is unclouded the whole world is lit up. But when your eye is diseased the whole world is dark. So it is with the spirit. If men dull their souls by debauches, or drunkenness, or by the anxieties of life, the inner light which is in them is darkened. In truth I tell you that, unless men become like little children, they cannot enter the kingdom of God. He that hath marvelled shall reign. If a man does not look at life with his heart full of love and wonder like a child, he will never see God. For God reveals things to the child-like which he hides from the clever and learned."

"Can any man prefer darkness to light?" John asked.

"A man who lives an evil life hates the light, and will not come into it for fear that in it he should see himself," said Jesus. "No man who lives up to his light fears to face the truth. If men do not trouble to hear, they become dull of hear-

ing; if they do not care to live in the light, they become blind. So it is with the spirit. I speak what I know. Heaven and earth will pass away, but these laws will never pass."

When Jesus had said this he was silent. The great boughs of the cedars swayed slowly in a sudden wind, and far in the forest a bough cracked and dropped heavily to the ground. For a time the disciples were silent too, listening to the sounds of the forest, and then they fell to talk amongst themselves. They spoke of the crowds who followed Jesus and of the ways men worked to get their livings. Then they spoke of the things they had heard the people of Tyre and Sidon say, and of what men were saying of Jesus.

"One man said he was John the Baptizer, new-risen from the dead," said a disciple, while another said,

"I heard a woman say he was Elijah."

"No, it was Jeremiah," said a third.

"They all said he was one of the old Prophets who had risen again to help us," said another.

Suddenly Jesus turned to them and said,

"And who do you yourselves say I am?"

The disciples, taken aback, looked at one another, but did not answer. Peter kept quiet for a moment pondering, and then his mind seemed

to make a jump, and he cried out, his eyes bright with love and enthusiasm,

"I say you are the Messiah."

Jesus looked at him, and there was a great affection in his eyes, but his voice was sad when he spoke.

"Do you know what it means to be a Messiah, Peter?" he asked.

Peter shook his head. Jesus went on, speaking as a man speaks of things long thought over.

"If a man would be a Deliverer he must be ready to undergo much pain and to suffer. He will be rejected by his own generation. The councillors and the priests and the teachers will not listen to him. He will be spat on and despised; he will have contempt and scorn for his portion, and, at the last, it may be he will lose his life."

He ceased, and no one spoke. Peter looked uncomfortable, but after a moment he rallied himself, and began to rebuke Jesus.

"Please God, Master, that will never be your fate," he said.

Jesus turned to him, and there was pain in his voice.

"You are hindering me, Peter. You do not look on things as God does, but as man does. I have a work to do, however great be my distress before it is finished. If a man puts his hand to the plough

and looks back, he is not fit for the Kingdom of God. Do not tempt me to fear those who have power to kill the body. They can never kill the soul."

Again he was silent, and when he spoke, it was with balance and judgment, as a man speaks of something of which he has counted the cost.

"Through anguish and suffering men enter the kingdom. He who wishes to be my follower must take up his cross and deny himself. If a man is not ready to lose his life for the kingdom he will lose himself. Where is the profit if in gaining the world a man loses his soul? Can he earn aught of value equal to himself? I tell you that he who is ready to lose his life for my sake has found himself, and if a man endure to the end he shall find life too. For it is by endurance that men win life."

It was after this teaching that Jesus sent the disciples through Galilee to spread the good news, but he himself went round the lake by way of the Greek cities to Capernaum, where he was to spend the summer.

X

THE house in which Jesus lived at Capernaum was near the northern entrance to the town where the road from Damascus first touches the lake. It was a small house by the roadside. Behind it the ground sloped down to the beach where boats could be drawn up for repair. There was a space of beaten-down earth all round the house, with here and there a cardoon or an aloe, and in one corner of this rough courtyard a clump of tall palms nodded their plumes together.

Capernaum was a large town, and there was plenty of work for a carpenter. The boats that daily went out in fleets to fish on the blue waters of the lake were in constant need of repair, so were the fittings of the caravans that passed to and fro on the road, and the tools of the husbandmen who cultivated the garden-like land round the lake. Jesus and his brothers were always busy. James was older than Jesus and very like him in the face, but of a heavier, harder make. The other brothers, Simon and Judas and Joseph, were not always at home, but came and went as the work

called. The sisters of Jesus were married, and I seldom saw them. They were a kind family and fond of each other, for, though there had been much talk of how they had checked Jesus when his message first came to him, by this time they had accepted his teaching and helped him where they could. I never asked Jesus why he and his family had left Nazareth, but I think it was because they had found it hard to earn their bread there. Nazareth was a small, poor village, and out of the beaten track. Jesus was urgent to make his living, but he was more urgent to deliver his message, and Capernaum was better fitted for both purposes than Nazareth. He could teach as he worked, and when he had earned enough to buy leisure for a few days, he could leave the business in the care of James, and go off to teach in another part of the country. The house was kept by Mary, who was often to be seen in her blue garments, either cleaning inside it, or going to the well to draw water.

The beaten earth of the courtyard was swept clean every morning by either Jesus or James, and here, sitting by the roadside under the palms, Jesus made ploughs and yokes for oxen, or mended the pack-saddles and other matters belonging to the caravans that passed on the road. Here, in the evening after sunset, the people brought to him

those who were ill, until sometimes the whole city seemed to be gathered round his door.

Here lingered the strange caravan leaders from distant countries to listen to his talk and tell him of the doings in their own lands. Here, too, came the Pharisees and teachers of the law, sometimes out of interest to hear what the new teacher had to say, but more often to spy round and pick holes in the teaching. And here, too, came I to sit with Jesus in the dust and talk.

I could not come as often as I wished, for all that summer I was hard at work. I was master of flocks and of herds, of cornlands and vineyards, but when I asked Jesus what way I was to deal with them he shook his head and would not tell me.

"What would you do?" I urged.

"How could I teach if I had the cares of riches?" he asked. "You must do it for yourself. How would you learn if I told you?"

"Must I give all to the poor?" I questioned.

"Could the love of God dwell in you if you steel your heart and look on while your brother is in want?" he answered.

I felt Jesus himself would have given all away, but I was of a different build, so I set to work with Nicodemus, who was in some sort my guardian, and during all that summer I came back-

wards and forwards to Capernaum to tell Jesus of our plans. Nicodemus was too much a man of God to stop me or hold back anything, but he was wise as well as just, so we began by giving the labourers a larger hire. We increased the shepherd's share of the lambs and the vine-grower's share of the grapes. The husbandmen got a greater portion of the wheat, and we began to copy the Romans and made plans for bringing water by channels to the villages. We repaired the gates and walls to guard against the robbers who would in certainty come against the villages as the inhabitants grew wealthier. We made a store of grain for the head-man to use for hospitality, and in those villages which had none we planned to build synagogues.

This was all hard work, and it was a rest to come and sit with Jesus, and, where I could—but that I was unskilful—help him in his work. James scorned me for my unhandiness, but Jesus taught me how to smooth the elbow of wood for the ploughshare, and to fit the six pieces of the plough together. He showed me how to make wooden locks, and how to bore the holes in the ox-yokes, and I marvelled when I saw the care with which he worked when he fitted the yoke-pegs. I told him so, and he said,

"The oxen are working to make our bread. If

the yoke does not fit they will suffer, and their owner will always be adjusting it. If you love your neighbours, you want them to work without irk. Therefore I take pains."

"Will your neighbour be pleased?" I asked.

"Each time he puts this yoke on his oxen and sees how well it fits, his heart ought to glow within him, and he be full of love. But if it is not so, what then? God sends his rain on the just and the unjust, and the man has paid for the yoke."

Another day he was mending a camel chest and he told me,

"This chest will go to Damascus and the Indies with a wise man with whom I have had much talk. It may be that each time he looks at it he will think of the carpenter at Capernaum who mended it just to his liking. He is a brown-faced man, with eyes like jewels, and has much wisdom. He knows that if man is to have joy he must labour, not only for bread for the body which perishes, but for living bread for the soul which God our Father gives us when we love one another."

These were times when by chance we were alone, but we were not often left to ourselves. The people all round flocked to hear the teaching, and the courtyard was seldom empty. There was a passion of pity in Jesus, and he loved people as I have never known another love. They came to

him with all their pains, and he healed both body and soul. No matter how tired he was, he gathered his strength together to help, and when the power came on him, no evil could stand before him. I got to know that small house as well as my own, and the very sight of it made a well of joy and romance spring up in my heart. Each time I returned I found the same peace, Mary tending the house and Jesus working at his trade, and always there was that sense of complete understanding of others that is like a beautiful colour in the sky or cold well-water in a parching land.

It was in that rude courtyard, on the clean-swept beaten earth under the palm trees where the ox-yokes were stacked, that I first heard Jesus speak of God in man. I remember that it was on a day when the peace of the courtyard had been broken by the Pharisees. It was summer and dry weather. The sun had shone all day long, and the sky was as blue as the lake. When the day's work was done Jesus had swept the chips and shavings from the courtyard with the broom of twigs, and Mary, the mother, had brought us out round bannocks of meal which she had just made, and bowls of sour milk. Then, when the sun was low and the palms showed like moulded metal against the pale, still sky, the people had gathered one by one into the courtyard.

They were chiefly people of the town, fishermen from the lake, who had left their nets in the boats drawn up on the beach, and men from the tanneries and dyeworks who had brought their wives. There were some merchants of the better sort, and the courtyard was nearly full, when a party of Pharisees arrived. These were men of substance, cheesemongers and oilmen and corn-chandlers, with one or two landowners, to whom the others paid much deference. They were all men of position and respectable, who bore rule over their households and kept their own laws, thinking their class the one perfect class. As I watched them push forward to the best places, with a hard disregard of other people's feelings, I noted that their faces all bore the same smug stamp. Though a man's mouth be hidden in his beard, the lines of his face cannot lie and his eyes betray his soul. There is no depth in the eye of a Pharisee, and his face cries his character aloud. Amongst these men I saw here the round dense eyes of one secure in his self-righteousness, and there the flat inward-turning eye of the more uneasy lover of self, afraid that due honour will not be ceded him, and persistently crying out for flattery. They looked from side to side, and made comments on all they saw, as if all other men were deaf, and this a show provided to entertain them and to pass an

idle hour. And the people gave way before their unconscious insolence as they elbowed their path to where Jesus sat under the palm trees. Some women of the town were standing near by with Mary Magdalene, and when the Pharisees caught sight of these there was a stir amongst them and much nodding of heads, and sly calling the attention of one and the other to their presence. One said to another in a whisper that all could hear,

"This man welcomes all outcasts. He even takes meals with tax-gatherers."

They did not greet Jesus, but when they had settled themselves with fuss on the only seat, a rough board laid on logs, one of them, a fat man, said with condescension,

"Well, Teacher, we have heard a great deal of your doctrine, and we have come to see you work a miracle."

Jesus turned to the Pharisees. There was no resentment in his attitude, but there was an amused look in his eyes, and the people, seeing this, pressed closer to hear what he was going to say.

"Cannot you yourself decide what is right without a miracle? When you see a cloud rising in the west, straightway you say 'There is a shower coming,' and so it is. When the south wind blows you say 'There will be heat,' and so it cometh to

pass. You know how to judge of earth and sky. Cannot you judge in this also?"

"But we want to see a sign from you, Teacher," said the fat man. He looked out of the corners of his eyes at his neighbour as if with some secret meaning, and folded his thick hands on his stomach.

Jesus in one quick look seemed to measure and sum up the worth of the men before him. Then he said,

"No sign will be given you," and there was no appeal from the decision in his voice.

The Pharisees were taken aback. They leaned together rather foolishly, and whispered as if they asked one another what next to say. Then one of them, a tall, lean man, with an uneasy eye, said aloud,

"He cannot do it. He casts out devils by the power of Satan, and if Satan be not here he is powerless."

The people murmured when they heard this, but Jesus laughed and said,

"How can a devil cast out devils? Will Satan revolt against himself? If he does, how can his kingdom stand? Is not a tree known by its fruits? A good tree produces good fruit and a bad tree bad fruit. Surely you must know that either tree

and fruit are bad or that both tree and fruit are good."

The Pharisees had no answer ready, and before they could find one Jesus went on,

"What fills a man's heart will rise to his lips. Let me tell you a story. There were two men who went up to the temple to pray, one was a Pharisee and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood where all men could see him and prayed aloud, 'Oh, God, I thank you that I am not as other men are, thieves, rogues, and adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. *I* fast twice a week, and give a tenth of all that I receive to God."

One of the fishermen gave a great laugh, but stifled it at once, and Jesus went on,

"The tax-gatherer stood where men could not see him, and he smote his breast and prayed, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you this man went home pardoned rather than the other. For he who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who is humble shall be exalted."

The uneasy-eyed Pharisee, as if he feared a hurt to his dignity, asked sharply,

"Are you telling this with reference to us?"

And Jesus answered,

"I am not here to call the righteous to repent, but sinners. Those who are well do not need any physician."

"We have always kept the law of Moses," answered the Pharisee.

"You can justify yourselves before men, but take care. God knows your hearts, and what is greatly admired by men may be abomination in the sight of God."

"Moses gave us the law," said another Pharisee. And Jesus said,

"Why do not you yourselves think out what is right and do it? But you clean the outside of the cup and then fill it inside with greed and self-indulgence. You are careful to strain out a gnat and then you swallow a camel. You pay the tithes on mint, fennel, and caraway-seed, and neglect justice and mercy and the love of God."

He did not speak in anger, but as if these things were manifest to all men, and the Pharisees were disturbed as they listened, and one said so that we all heard,

"Is not this man Jesus, the carpenter? Are not his brothers Joseph and James and Simon, and his mother Mary? How comes he to talk like this to us?"

"Every one who does the will of God is my brother and sister," said Jesus. "But you Pharisees have neither brothers nor sisters. If you do not love your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have never seen?"

The Pharisees were angry at this, but Jesus said,

"Listen. There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and a report was brought to him that the steward was wasting his goods. So the master called him and said, 'How is it that I learn this about you? You cannot be any longer steward, therefore give in the account of your stewardship.'

"Then the steward said within himself,

" 'What shall I do? My lord taketh away from me the stewardship; I have no strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed. I know! This will I do, so that when I am turned out people will welcome me to their houses.'

"So he called up his lord's debtors, and one by one he spoke to them. To the first he said,

" 'How much do you owe my lord?' And the debtor answered, 'Nine hundred and seventy-five gallons of oil.'

" 'Here is your bill. Sit down quickly and write five hundred and five gallons.' 'And you,' he said to the next debtor, 'how much do you owe?'

" 'Seventy quarters of wheat,' said the man.

" 'Here is your account. Change it to fifty-six,' said the steward.

"The master, when he heard, complimented this dishonest steward on his shrewdness."

"But the man was a scoundrel," interrupted the Pharisees in indignation.

"That may be," answered Jesus, with tranquillity. "But such men are often wiser than you children of light. For they make friends for themselves, even with their sins, while you make no friends at all. I tell you it is better to make friends even by the use of dishonest money, than it is to go through life friendless."

"You are preaching rank immorality," cried the Pharisees.

There was a change in the face of Jesus. The tranquillity left his eyes, and he spoke sternly,

"You blind guides," he said, "not only do you fall into the ditch yourself, but you lead others to fall also. I tell you that harlots and publicans will go before you into the kingdom of God because they care. They have loved their fellows, but you love no one. For no man loves less than he who needs no repentance."

"You were born a nobody, and do you teach us!" cried the Pharisees, and one said in scorn,

"The man is insane. Come, let us leave him."

"He is worse than mad. He is wicked," cried another, and they all rose and, shaking their garments, began to push their way out of the courtyard, jostling the people angrily, though they had done naught to them. They took a long time to file out, and the people kept silence till they had gone. When the last Pharisee had withdrawn,

and the air seemed cleared of oppression and men breathed freely again, Jesus said, and as he spoke peace and good-will settled again on the courtyard,

"The Pharisees have hidden the key of the knowledge of the kingdom. They will not go in themselves, or suffer others to enter. Beware of their leaven. Theirs is not true bread. Nevertheless, if they teach you of the law of God, lay what they say to heart, but do not do anything that they do, for they teach what they do not practise."

A woman cried out, and there was scorn in her voice,

"Do not heed them, master. Tell us your own teaching of the kingdom."

And Jesus answered,

"My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me. If you do God's will, you will learn whether the doctrine comes from God or whether I made it of myself."

"When shall we see the kingdom come to pass?" asked one in the crowd.

"The Kingdom of God will never be found by looking for it," Jesus answered.

"You will never be able to say, 'Lo, here,' or 'Lo, there is the kingdom!' The Kingdom of God is within you. Whoever shall know himself shall find it."

The people were silent, pondering over this teaching, and, after a moment, Jesus said,

"It is in the hearts of men that God has his dwelling. Let him who seeks the kingdom cease not till he find it. Strive to know yourselves, and you shall be aware that you are the sons of the father. No man has seen God, yet if we love one another we live in God and God in us. This is the true bread, the bread that God gives, that gives life to the world."

"Master, give us this bread," cried out the people.

"The bread of life is this knowledge of God. Just as God the father has life within himself, so has he granted this bread to his children that they may have the same life. It is by love that men pass out of death into life. He who does not love has never been alive."

A workman who was dyed from head to foot in the dyes in which he had worked all day, said,

"Teach us to know God."

Jesus paused, and in the silence nothing was heard but the lap-lapping of the lake water on the shore.

Then he answered,

"Men take seven years to learn a trade, but they think to know God in a day. Think you that the knowledge of God can be gained with more

ease than you learned your craft? If you would believe in God, you must be able to feel God. You must watch God work just as you watch, slowly and with care, to gain the knowledge of your craft. The birds of the air, and all the beasts that are upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea, will teach you to know God. I can do nothing of myself. I can only do what I see God doing, and I learn only by watching God work."

The man was silent, abashed, and Jesus said gently,

"God loves his children, and shows them all that he is doing. Is it not written, 'All thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children'? Therefore do not love with words only but with deeds and loyalty. I tell you that he who does not love will never know God, but he who lives in love lives in God and God in him, for God is love."

By this time it was night, and when Jesus had said this he spoke no more, and the people, all pondering deeply, went away to their homes. But Jesus himself went up to the mountains, and spent the night alone in prayer.

XI

IT was full summer before the disciples returned to Capernaum. Judas Iscariot was the last to come in. As I went down the Way of the Sea I met him at the fork of the road stalking along from Rameh. His flesh had fallen away from his bones, and his face was gaunt and grim. Some purpose seemed to fill his mind and drive him forward, for his features worked as he walked, and he talked to himself. When I greeted him he stopped and looked at me half-bewildered as if he had never seen my face before, and then suddenly he seemed to fit me into a place in his memory, for he called out eagerly,

"Is Jesus at Capernaum?" And when I said that he was, he forged forward again as if his purpose so filled his mind that there was room for nothing else. His eyes were bent on some point far ahead of him, and, like a dog on a trail, he made straight for that. He walked so fast that it was hard to keep up with him. Once he turned to me, and said,

"What is he doing?" And when I answered

"He is working at his trade," his eyes darkened and he muttered,

"He works at his trade when Israel is perishing." He did not speak again, but went forward faster than before.

When we reached Capernaum Judas turned aside for no one. Though several men spoke to him he paid no heed to their greetings, but made straight for the house of Jesus. And behold, when we reached it, the courtyard was empty and the space under the palms where the ox-yokes were stacked was vacant. The door of the house was shut and there was no one about. But Judas, after a glance or two around like a dog seeking scent, made for the beach, and here we found Jesus with three or four other men. The men, bent on their daily tasks, were about to launch a boat when Judas, travel-worn and thin, his beard and every line of his weary face heavy with dust, burst into their peace. They stopped their work and stared at him as if something in his aspect struck fear into them.

But Jesus seeing him, spoke,

"You have just returned? You look very tired."

"I have somewhat to say to you," Judas answered.

"When did you last eat?" Jesus asked him, but

Judas brushed the question aside, his mind so set on his purpose that he was regardless of his bodily weariness.

"I do not remember. This morning. What matter!" he said. "Where can we talk?"

"I was going to the other side of the lake. Come apart with me and rest awhile," said Jesus, and he put his shoulder to the gunnel of the boat, and I helping, we pushed her off. As she took the water I jumped in to steady her, and Judas followed. The other men would have clambered in, too, but Jesus put them aside, saying Judas would speak with him alone, and so they gave it up, and when Jesus had got in, helped to push us off with oars. Whether it was that they thought I was joined with Judas on his business, or whether they were used to seeing me with Jesus I know not, but they made no remark on my presence, and, indeed, the boat so quickly slid into deep water that I could not have got out of it if I would without leaving her guideless. So it came about that I heard what Judas had to say.

The wind was fresh, and Jesus and I set the sail. Judas did not help, but sat in the stern silent and absorbed while the boat raced across the blue lake to the other side. Here we landed, and tied the painter to a great stone. Jesus brought bread and dates from the boat, and we climbed to the

wide grassy plain above, but Judas would not eat.

"Later," he said, and, for a time, he lay face downwards on the bleached grass as if he thought of what he had to speak. Then suddenly he sat upright, and turned his haggard face to Jesus.

"Master," he said, "I have preached the kingdom as you told me. Throughout all Galilee I have found the same misery and slavery. Everywhere the hold of the Romans is tightening. Our statesmen do not care. They will never win us back our freedom. In a short time it will be too late."

His voice broke, and he covered his eyes with his hands. At the sight of his woe a lump came into my throat, and I turned away my head, but the tranquillity that lay in the eyes of Jesus did not waver. He sat patient, helping Judas with silence till he should recover himself.

In a moment Judas had mastered himself. He uncovered his eyes, and looked Jesus straight in the face.

"When I asked you before, you turned a deaf ear to me. But now I have seen the misery of the people, their oppression and starvation. Will you not listen? You alone can free them. You have but to lift your hand, and thousands will flock to you. Never has there been such a ferment. The people will follow you anywhere, even to death."

His voice was hoarse with passion, and he pleaded as a man pleads for what he desires most upon earth.

"I cannot do it myself," he said. "The people will not follow me. I lack something. I have not the power to win men's hearts as you have, Master. And you care for them. You have seen their misery. Will you not help? Restore to us our nation."

A great compassion shone in the eyes of Jesus, and there was reverence in his voice as he answered,

"Judas, it is not the way. Listen. Once before this temptation came upon me. When the message first came to me, when I looked round on the world and saw men as they are, and God told me to tell them what they might be, then I was driven into the wilderness, and there I fought with devils. God gives the message. It is for the Messenger to learn how to deliver it. Your question was before me, Judas, and to find an answer I wrestled with the powers of evil. All the kingdoms of this world and their splendour seemed to pass before me, and a voice within me said, 'These will all acknowledge your kingdom, and the rule of the God who sent you. But you must first unite the people and drive out those who stop them from living as God would have them live. Then will God have the kingdom, the power, and the glory.' In my

soul I pondered, and then I saw the meaning of the devil that spoke within me, and I said, 'Oh, Satan, if I by your evil help drive out evil, then will you, not God, be Ruler. I will not fall down and worship you. For if I by force drive out force, will not the strong reign? And if I by cruelty drive out cruelty, will not the cruel be master?' I tell you, No, Judas, I will never hand this world over to the Master of cruelty and force. It is not the way."

He ceased speaking. Judas did not answer. He sat silent, shaken, but not convinced; his body crouched together, and in his stress he gnawed his knuckles. Suddenly he looked up from beneath his pent brows, and said,

"Under our present rule the people starve. It is in your power to give them liberty. If you will not have them fight for that high ideal, will you lead, that they may have bread?"

Jesus put the taunt aside, and answered gently,

"That temptation, too, has been before me. God has given me power, but if I use my power to give bread only I should be a traitor. Man does not live by bread alone, but by the breath of God within him. If God gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish and man turn into dust. No, Judas; neither is that the way. Men must seek first the kingdom of God and his right-

eousness, and all these things will be added to them."

Judas was not vanquished. His head drooped on his chest, and with one hand he plucked restlessly at the tufts of grass beside him and, unseeing, flung them from him. After a moment he sighed and glanced at Jesus, and there was craft in his eye.

"God guards his servants," he said. "It is natural to shrink from sacrifice that seems too great to bear. But God would preserve his Messenger. Your power is great. You could escape."

Jesus met his look, and in his own there was so much of sadness and of pity that the cunning glint died out of the eyes of Judas.

"Judas," he said. "What I have taught shall I not stand by? God will not alter his laws to save even the most beloved servant. What a man sows that shall he also reap. If I, using my powers carelessly, trust to God to make a success of my failure, I am again in the power of the Devil. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

There was silence. Judas frowned as if his mind was working hard, and suddenly, as if he abandoned his purpose, he rose to his feet.

"Master," he said, "if you will not lead in Galilee, will you go to Jerusalem?"

Jesus replied,

"But, Judas, I have been to Jerusalem. Was it not in Jerusalem that I first met you?"

"You have never preached the kingdom in Jerusalem," said Judas, and the lines of his face twitched and then hardened as if he sought to hide his thought. Jesus, still seated on the grass, searched his face, and Judas, bracing himself, met his eyes. A long look passed between the two, and then Jesus, too, rose to his feet and said,

"I will go to Jerusalem."

Judas stared at him.

"You will go to Jerusalem?" he asked, as if amazed at his own success.

"I will go to Jerusalem," Jesus repeated, and half to himself he added, "It is not meet that a Prophet should die out of Jerusalem."

Judas caught the words and answered hastily,

"You will not die. You will go to a triumph"; and, suddenly, as if seized with suspicion, he cried,

"You mean it? You have promised? You will not fail me?"

Jesus stooped and gathered up the bread and dates which Judas had rejected. Then he turned and said,

"I will never fail you, Judas."

And with that the talk ended.

XII

THE people of my villages began their ploughing and sowing about the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, and there was other business too that called me to the high lands of Galilee, so that I could not go to Jerusalem that autumn. I lingered as late as I could in Capernaum to be with Jesus, and the last teaching I ever heard from his lips, though then I knew it not, was his talk with Peter of the seven times forgiveness.

Now Peter and the others had all come back from their preaching tour, with their heads swollen with success. Their talk was still of the crowds that had flocked to hear them, and of how men never ceased to debate of the new teaching. Often, too, I heard them dispute as to who should be greatest in the Kingdom. Jesus listened to their talk, as he listened to every one, with courtesy and intently, his lips lightly closed and his understanding eyes fixed on the speaker's face as if he read his soul. I noticed that sometimes as he listened a shadow seemed to hang over him as if he doubted himself and even his message. Once or twice I

noticed, too, that Peter would begin his boasts, and then suddenly, though Jesus spoke no word to him, he would cease. Silence would fall upon him, and he would look uneasily at Jesus as if he questioned his own motives and wanted reassuring. There were two men in Peter, as in every one of us, and the fight for self-mastery had begun in his soul. Peter was learning to know himself, and from each combat his spirit, even if beaten, rose again to renew the battle.

It was on a day when I had seen this new uneasiness in Peter that in the evening Jesus went away up into the mountains, and took with him Peter and James and John. They did not return until the next day, and in the meantime much had happened. For early in the morning there came a man seeking Jesus, and bringing with him his son, who, he said, was possessed by a devil. However that might be, the boy was very ill. Even as his father asked for Jesus, he broke away and ran from him, grinding his teeth. The father, in despair, calling to us for help ran after him, but when at the outskirts of the town he caught him, the boy dashed himself to the ground and wallowed there, foaming at the mouth. His father held him down, lamenting aloud that Jesus was not there to cure him. People were hastening from all sides to see what had happened, and some of the disciples came

running too with the rest of the crowd. Seeing these, a woman cried out that they would help.

"They can cast out devils even as Jesus does. Ask them. They will heal your son," she said to the man.

But the man, hearing her, was angry, and said bitterly,

"I asked them before, and they tried, but could do nothing. What use are they? They are only cheats, like all magicians."

The disciples were affronted when they heard him say this, and said they were not to blame. They had done their best.

"We did what we could," one cried. "But even Peter, who shaped well to be a caster-out of devils, failed with your son."

Others said that the boy had seventy devils in him, and that it was not to be expected they could all be cast out. At this there arose a great dispute, and some teachers of the law began to argue with the man and with the disciples as to whose was the fault, and how many devils could inhabit a man. They all talked at once, and the noise was deafening. The poor father, kneeling beside his son, had much ado to keep the crowd from pressing on him, and kept calling aloud for more room.

Of a sudden some one cried out that Jesus had come, and the crowd broke up and ran to see. In

the space they left I saw Jesus coming towards us, followed by Peter and James and John.

At the sight of him a lull fell on the crowd. For the shadow had fallen from him, and a great peace shone in his eyes. Hope was renewed within him, and again, as on the day when I first saw him, tranquillity lay upon him, the tranquillity of one who rests in a surety greater than other men know.

"What are you all arguing about amongst yourselves?" Jesus asked as the man came up to him and greeted him.

"Teacher," answered the man. "I brought my son to see you, as he has a devil, and is pining away. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they failed."

Jesus turned to the disciples:

"Oh! faithless generation," he said. "How long must I teach you? How long must I have patience with you? Bring the boy to me."

A dozen people ran to lift the boy, but when they touched him he fell into convulsions, and again rolled on the ground foaming at the mouth.

"How long has he been like this?" Jesus asked the father.

"Since he was a child," the man answered. "And often he falls into the fire or into water, and tries to kill himself. If you can possibly heal him, have pity and help us."

"Why do you say possibly? Everything is possible to one who has faith," Jesus replied, and he spoke with so much kindness and certainty that the man cried out with tears, "Lord, I have faith. Help thou my lack of it!"

So Jesus healed the lad, and when the devil, if it was a devil, had gone away, the convulsions ceased, and the boy lay on the ground like a corpse, so that many people looking at him shook their heads and said, "He is dead." But Jesus took his hand, and raised him up and gave him back to his father; and then he went away to his house, and the disciples followed.

When we reached the house and went in, the disciples pressed round Jesus and asked eagerly,

"Why could we not cast out the devil?"

"This power comes only by prayer and fasting," said Jesus. "Every sacrifice is salted by salt. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its saltness, how can it be salted again? If it cannot, it is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill, but is thrown away and trodden underfoot. It is only by fire that it can be salted again. Have salt therefore in yourselves, and peace with one another. Let him that has ears to hear with, hear."

Now Peter was wroth because some one had told him what had been said of his failure, and

glowering, he answered the rebuke that he felt in the words of Jesus.

"Say what you like about salt, but it was the man who was at fault. He had no faith. One cannot help such people. There was something about him, I know not what, but I did not trust him."

He spoke out of the soreness of his heart, and Jesus answered quickly, and there was much tenderness and some mockery in his voice,

"Be careful, Peter, for in every idle word men speak they give an account of themselves."

But Peter, still gloomy, averted his face like a proud dog after punishment, and answered,

"My words are not idle. I do well to be angry."

"If you cherish anger against your brother you cannot be friends with God," said Jesus. "Anger is an evil demon. If your brother has acted wrongly to you, you must go to him alone and tell him his fault. If he listens you have gained your brother. If you have acted wrongly to him you must seek his forgiveness before you can be friends with God. How can you expect God to forgive you your sins against him if you do not forgive your brother when he wrongs you?"

Peter, still obstinate, was silent, and Jesus said,

"Listen, Peter. The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who began to have

a settlement of accounts with his officials. And one was brought before him who owed ten thousand pounds, which he was unable to pay. So the king commanded that the man and his wife and his children and everything that he had should be sold, that the price might go towards the payment of the debt.

"When he heard the sentence the man was horrified, and threw himself on the ground before the king and wept, crying out, 'Only have patience and I will pay you all.' And the king was moved with sorrow at the pain of his servant, and he set him free and forgave him the debt. But that same man on going out from the court met a fellow servant who owed him one hundred shillings, and he took him by the throat and nearly strangled him, saying,

" 'Pay me what you owe me.'

"And his fellow-servant threw himself on the ground before him, crying out:

" 'Only have patience and I will pay you all.'

"But he would not, but put him in prison till he should pay.

"When the other servants saw what had happened they were greatly distressed, and went to the king and laid the whole matter before him. Then the king called that wicked servant again before him, and said to him,

" 'I forgave you all your debt when you begged for mercy. Ought you not to have had compassion on your fellow-servant when he, too, begged for mercy? Even as I had pity on you ought you not to have pitied him? Now you will be handed over to the torturers till you have paid the whole of your debt.'

"And he cast him into prison. So also God who has pity on you will do, if you do not each one of you forgive your own brother from your heart."

When Jesus had finished Peter sat silent for a few moments. Suddenly he turned his face, and said impulsively,

"How often am I to forgive my brother when he sins against me? As many as seven times?"

"Seven times!" Jesus answered. "No! I did not say seven times, but seventy times seven."

"But, master, if I forgive him he will take advantage of me again."

Jesus nodded in agreement.

"He may."

"Must I then go on forgiving and forgiving, and each time be made a fool of?" Peter questioned, hotly; and Jesus answered, and there was no mockery now in his voice, but only tenderness,

"If your enemy hunger, give him bread to eat. If he thirst, give him water. If he would take

your cloak, give him your coat also. If you meet his ox or his ass going astray, bring it back to him. If he conscript you to carry his goods one mile, carry them for two. It is in this way that you become children of your father in Heaven. Does he not daily cause his sun to rise on the good and the bad?"

Peter thought for a moment, and then he cried out:

"Master, give us faith."

And Jesus answered,

"Men are ready to move mountains by faith, and yet are not willing to enter into the kingdom by forgiving one another. Forgiveness is faith. Therefore, when you stand up to pray, forgive any grievance you have against any one and God will grant you what you ask."

"But God does not always answer?" one questioned.

"Then entreat him again and again. Pray always, and never despair. Ask, and it shall be given you. Ask great things, and little things shall be added to you. Ask heavenly things, and earthly things will be added. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and a door will be opened before you. For God will give you the spirit of truth to guide you to all truth. I tell you all manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men, but a refusal to listen

for this voice of God within you shall not be forgiven."

"Master, teach us to pray," said one of the disciples.

And Jesus answered,

"When you pray let the communion be between God and yourself alone. Do not stand where you can be seen of men, but go away into your own room and shut the door and pray there to your father who dwells in secret, and your father who knows all that is secret will enlighten you. When you pray say 'Father, may thy name be kept holy. Let thy kingdom come. Teach us to do thy will on earth as it is done in heaven. Give us each day the bread that we shall need. And forgive us our sins, helping us to forgive those who sin against us. And take us not into trials, but deliver us from evil.' "

It was with this talk in my head that I went to my ploughing.

XIII

MY days went swifter than a post that winter, and I heard nothing of the doings in Jerusalem nor did I see Jesus. In South Galilee gossip ran along every road, but my villages in the north were cut off from this traffic; and though the talk in them still raged about the teaching, no man knew what fate the doctrine had met in Judea.

It was Nicodemus who first told me that Jesus was in danger. By this time spring was nearly here again, and I had sent to Judea to ask for some monies that I needed. Now Nicodemus was an old man, and when the mule train came in and I saw him riding at its head, I was astonished that he should have come himself when he might as easily have sent a steward. But when he had alighted from his mule and, after delivering to me the monies, had washed and refreshed himself and we were alone in the room, he said,

"I have grave news for you. I have come straight from Jerusalem, where your friend Jesus has been teaching all winter. His fame has spread through all Judea. He has gone back to

Capernaum now, and I have come to warn you that if he returns to Jerusalem for the Passover the Priests and Council will have his life."

"Why, what has he done?" I cried.

"The Council thinks he is dangerous," answered Nicodemus. "There is great division amongst the people, and as his followers grow, so do his opponents. There is no open discussion in Jerusalem because of the authorities, but the city is full of whispers, and rumours fly about in secret. Some say he is a good man, while others insist he is leading the people astray. Many say that he is the Prophet spoken of by David, and others are sure that he is the Messiah. Some people argue that he cannot be the Messiah as he comes from Galilee, and the Scriptures say the Messiah must come from Bethlehem, David's village, and be of David's race. It is said that men went and asked Jesus himself about this last, and he answered that as David in the Psalms called the Messiah Lord, how could it be that the Messiah was David's son? But even with this from Jesus, many people look to see in him the fulfilment of prophecy, and the tumult grows. The Rulers are afraid. They have no wish to see the Kingdom of God established on earth. The good news that Jesus preaches is not good to those who bear rule."

"It would be," I said, "if they would only forgo their ordering of other men and be content to serve."

Nicodemus looked at me out of his wise old eyes.

"The last thing men will forgo is that," he said. "Jesus is too clear-sighted not to know the risks that lie in such teaching. They will kill him for that alone."

"They cannot kill him for his teaching of the Kingdom," I said.

Nicodemus shook his head.

"They will find an excuse."

"They cannot," I cried.

"A way will be found. Do I not know? Am I not also a Ruler of Israel? But let me tell you all, and you can judge for yourself."

"Tell on," I answered, and sat silent to listen.

"The matter has not yet come before the Council as a whole, but I hear others of the Seventy talk, and so I know. Some of the Rulers have already tried to embroil Jesus with the Romans. If they could prove an offence against the Imperial law, then the Romans would deal with him, and the blame of the people would fall upon them. So they have sought to show that the teaching of Jesus is the same as that taught by Judas of Gaulonite. You are too young to remember

the rebellion led by this Judas, but Jesus must have heard of it. It was when the Romans first put a tax on us, in the days of the Procurator Coponius. Our people took this taxation heinously until the High Priest persuaded them to cease opposing it. But this Judas never ceased his opposition, proclaiming that the taxation was the beginning of slavery, and that the Jews were cowards if they endured to pay a tax to the Romans, seeing that God was our only Ruler. I mind me well of the misfortunes that came of all this. One violent rising after another, robberies and murders and famine. But the Romans prevailed."

"I have heard my father speak of it when he was alive," I said.

"All men spoke of it," said Nicodemus. "This Judas inflamed our nation to an extraordinary degree. Even now his followers are not all dead. But they keep quiet. If they raised a voice, the Romans would not let them live a day. They will as quickly slay Jesus, if they have proof that his doctrine is that of the Gaulonite. Now I will show you the full craft of the Priests and Rulers. They sent men to Jesus to seek out such evidence. These men spoke fair to him and pretended to be in sympathy with his teaching. They said, 'We know you teach God's way truly and that you are no respecter of the masks of men, but see

straight through all outward shows to the inner man.' When they had thus hinted that Jesus had the like attachment to liberty that Judas preached, they said, 'Now, tell us honestly, are we right in paying taxes to Cæsar or no?"

"It was a vile trick," I said.

"Jesus was not taken in by it," said Nicodemus. "He asked them to show him a denarius, and the men, somewhat wondering, handed him the coin. 'Whose head and inscription is this?' he said, and the men answered, 'Cæsar's.' 'Then pay to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar and to God what belongs to God,' said Jesus."

"He is too clever to be caught," I said, and Nicodemus answered,

"Yes. But that does not endear him to the Priests and Council."

"I hate them for their enmity," I cried with passion, but Nicodemus said,

"Your friend would not have you feel thus. How can you help God to undo the evil such men do if you are so blinded by hate that you cannot see what was in their minds when they did it? Look you, I am old and have seen much of life, but I try to put myself in the place of these men and know what they feel. Cannot you do likewise?"

I was abashed and said,

"Jesus rebuked them. I have seen his anger."

"When Jesus rebuked them was it not because they refused to show kindness? Has Jesus ever preached any but one way into the Kingdom? Your friend is gentle and great and humble. I am not as he," said Nicodemus. "I do not say you should love the Pharisees, but I ask you to show understanding of them. If they kill Jesus it will be from the best of motives."

"And not because they hate him?" I cried, unbelieving.

Nicodemus smiled sadly.

"Think you there is room in the soul of Caiaphas for so wild a passion as hate? His heart is cold. There is no fire within him. How can such a one understand Jesus? He can but think him a fool."

"No man ever looked in the face of Jesus and thought him a fool," I cried.

"To Caiaphas a clever man preaching folly is more dangerous than a fool. As you live your life, you judge your neighbours. How can these men, whose thoughts are only of bearing rule upon earth, judge of Jesus, whose message is to mind men of the spirit? There are limits to what a man may hold in his thoughts, and theirs are only of this world."

"It cannot be that Jesus will lose his life because of a misunderstanding?" I said.

"No ruler will admit that he does not understand," answered Nicodemus. "And indeed, if God's Kingdom were here there would be much change. Jesus himself says the last will be first and the first last. The Rulers do not want change. They are satisfied with the power they hold under the Romans. They think it their duty to keep our religion and customs as they were handed down to us. Jesus does not regard matters of the law as the Rulers do. He preaches more liberty than our customs have allowed. He knows that if you give a man the right to choose for himself, you give him the right to make mistakes, but he has a boundless faith that God will teach if men but listen. The Priests have not this faith. They say he is upsetting all law and order. Take the question of the Sabbath. The Priests say that Jesus preaches against the Sabbath, and that, if he destroys the Sabbath, the Romans will force conscription into their armies upon us. They cannot train men who keep the seventh day as strictly as do the Jews. Even the Roman discipline would be broken by that custom. It is only the strict observance of the Sabbath that has hitherto kept us from serving."

Nicodemus was much perturbed, and my anxiety grew as I listened.

"That is the danger for Jesus," he went on.

"He will be killed by men who believe in their own good intentions. The Rulers are sure they do the will of God. They think now, and they are sincere—remember I am one of them and come straight from Jerusalem—that if Jesus goes on preaching there will be a tumult in Galilee. The Galileans have always been turbulent. They may try to establish the Kingdom by throwing off the Roman rule. If there is a rising, whatever its result, the Priests and Rulers will lose. If Jesus wins, he is no friend to their power and they will go. If the Romans win, then also our Rulers must lose, for the Romans will blame them for the rising and will take away the powers of the Council."

"But it is not in the heart of Jesus to lead a rebellion," I said.

"It is in the heart of some of his disciples," said Nicodemus. "If the Priests do not understand the teaching, neither do the disciples. Judas Iscariot has done him much harm. It is in my mind that he tries to make a tool of Jesus. I do not trust him."

"He has tried, but Jesus would not listen," I said.

"He will try to force his hand," said Nicodemus. "Judas is blinded by hate of the Romans. From what I have seen of Jesus he will not be

able to sway his will. But if Judas joined Jesus, hoping for the deliverance of our nation, what will he do when he learns that Jesus does not mean rebellion? Judas is as bitter at heart as a camel. He is a dangerous man to disappoint."

My heart was sick as I listened. Nicodemus was so balanced and wise and yet so anxious.

"But there is Pilate," I cried, seeing a ray of hope. "The Council cannot kill without the Roman permit. Pilate is no friend of the Priests."

"Pilate's position is not so secure that he can risk a conflict either with the people or with the Council. He has few troops in Judea. The Rulers will bring such evidence that he cannot resist, even if he distrust it. Men say, too, that the Emperor looks at him with suspicion since he failed to bring the ensigns with Cæsar's effigies to Jerusalem. The Jews defeated Pilate in that. Here again is misunderstanding. Cæsar does not know the strength of our feeling against graven images, but if he learn that his ensigns now pass Jerusalem by a back way, he may demand the worship of his effigy. The Jews will die rather than render it, and this Pilate knows. If he cannot make Cæsar understand our customs, and if, on top of this, there is tumult, and troops have to be sent from Syria, Pilate will be recalled, and perhaps lose his head. There is another matter, too, that

men speak of—Pilate needs the favour of the High Priest in his plan for bringing water by aqueduct to Jerusalem. These Romans like to leave such memorials of their rule. Pilate wants to pay for this out of the Temple treasury. Where else can he find the money? If he is to use the Corban must he not be friends with the High Priest? But you know Pilate, even as I do."

"I have always found him a just man," I said.

"Just, but hard," said Nicodemus. "What is one life to him if he can purchase order by sacrificing it? He has shed much blood before and will again."

We fell silent again, I pondering, and then another hope, weak indeed, struck me, and I said,

"Jesus is not under the jurisdiction of Pilate. He is of Galilee and under Herod. Herod has shown great interest in him and sent for him."

Nicodemus shook his head.

"Herod is like all men of his sort and curious of novelty. Did Jesus go to see him?"

"No, he refused," I answered.

"Then Herod will do nothing to help him. He may be angry if Pilate usurps his authority, but he does not want sedition in Galilee. If he killed Jesus the people would blame him, but Herod is a fox. He will let Pilate do it, and put the blame on the Romans. And in any case the Priests will

arrest Jesus in Jerusalem, and he is under Pilate there."

"They cannot arrest him without evidence that he preaches rebellion," I persisted.

"You do not understand their craft," said Nicodemus. "If they fail in that, as they must fail, Jesus being so wise, they have another contrivance. They will indict him for treason."

"Treason? How can that be?" I asked.

"Our Priests maintain that the laws under which they hold their power were given us by God. Therefore to teach the breaking of them is blasphemy. The desecration of the Sabbath may seem a small matter to Pilate, but the Priests will then say that Jesus preaches that he is the son of God and that the divine lives in him."

"Of course he does," I said. "It is part of his teaching that God is our father and has his dwelling within us. I have often heard him teach so. And if God is our father, must we not be his sons?"

"Our rulers are blind," said Nicodemus. "If they had feeling they could burst the scales that blind their eyes. But cold-hearted they listen to Jesus, and when he tells of a spiritual kingdom, they think he desires to found an earthly one, and when he tells of the divine in man they say he teaches that he himself is God. The punishment

for blasphemy is death. They mean to kill him. Let me tell you more. There is a man, a mason, who had a withered arm. Jesus healed him."

"I know. I saw him do it," I said.

"The man is working at his trade again. The Pharisees were angry with him for his gratitude to Jesus, and to stop his mouth they told him that Jesus claimed to be God, and the man answered that of a certainty he was more than man, for such kindness was never shown by a man to men. The Pharisees are full of wrath with the man, but he blazons it abroad, and his testimony will help to kill Jesus. That is not the only thing. There has already been an attempt to arrest Jesus. The Chief Priest sent some of the officials to bring him before the Council, but the men found him teaching, and waited until he had finished, wanting to bring him away quietly for fear of the people. I was at the Council myself when the men returned without Jesus. The Chief Priest asked them why they had not brought Jesus, and all the excuse the men could offer was that they had never heard any man speak as he did. The Chief Priest was so taken aback that he could only say,

" 'Has he deceived you too, as he has the common people, who are ignorant of the law?'

"Another of the Pharisees said to the men,

" 'The common people are cursed in their ignorance. None of the Rulers or Pharisees have been taken in by him.' I thought all this so unfair that I asked if it was according to our Law to judge a man without having heard his defence, or even knowing anything of his deeds. They all turned on me then, and Jonathan, the son of Annas, said, sneering, 'Are you also from Galilee? Search the Scriptures and see whether they say that a Prophet is to come out of Galilee!' "

I laid my hand on the hand of Nicodemus, the bravery of the frail old man so touched me, and for a time we sat silent. Then he went on,

"There was another day when Jesus was teaching in the Temple Court and the Priests themselves came to confront him. They said to him, 'Tell us by what authority you act? Who gave you your authority?' Jesus answered them, 'I too will ask you a question. Give me an answer first. Was the baptism that John gave of divine or of human origin?' You see what a dilemma this put them in? If they said divine, Jesus would ask them why they had refused to believe in it, and they dared not say human because of the people around them, who all believed that John was inspired."

"What did they do?" I asked.

"Oh, they gave it up. They said they did not

know, and Jesus at once answered that then he, too, would not answer them as to his authority for his deeds."

"Is there no way to save him?" I asked.

"I have done what I could and failed," said Nicodemus. "It was for that I came north. For you may do something. Your father was a friend to Caiaphas and you know Pilate. You must go to Jerusalem. At the least you can warn Jesus and perchance withdraw him for a time."

For a moment hope lit up my heart. Then I remembered, and the flame died away.

"Jesus will never flee," I said. "He has it in his mind that he may have to suffer. I mind me of things he has said. He knows that if he goes to the Passover he goes most surely to his death."

"Nevertheless, we may save him. And if not——" Nicodemus paused.

"If not?" I repeated.

"Death is the right of all," said Nicodemus.

"Must he die?" I cried out in anguish.

"If he resist, the people will rise. Jesus would never thus cause desolation. But how can he resist? Has he not taught that wrong is never to be repaid by wrong, or violence by violence? If he resists, the Pharisees will soon point out that his teaching has a flaw. Has he not said that they taught what they did not mean to follow?"

I buried my face in my hands.

"Son," said Nicodemus, and in his voice was the great tenderness of the aged who have learnt wisdom in the service of God, "Lift up your heart. We will do what man can. It may be possible to persuade Caiaphas to take no action against Jesus, seeing that the teaching means peace and love only. Let us go to Capernaum and see Jesus, and then we can travel on to Judea."

And so we set out for Jerusalem. But we rode under black shadow, the shadow of misunderstanding, a shadow that darkened the world.

XIV

IT was night when we reached Capernaum, and save for the barking of the dogs who arose from their sleep in the soft dust of the street as we entered, there was no sound to be heard. The depression in me had deepened during the slow journey south, and as we neared the crowded villages and towns about the lake it seemed as if everywhere man's power was closing round me crushing my life. No wind stirred, and there was something stifling in the air, as if all freedom and bracing had been left behind in the cold north, and the breath of God had ceased to breathe through Capernaum.

Near by the house of Jesus I got down from my mule, leaving Nicodemus, who being old was worn out by travel, to go on with the mule train to the house where we had settled to rest that night. Misery was so heavy upon me that I felt I should choke within walls, but Jesus might be sleeping beneath the palms in the courtyard, and if I could but see him I felt the blackness would fall from me.

The moon was up and shone through the heat haze, but her light was dim. The great plumes of the palms rose motionless, massed against the sky, but there were no ox-yokes stacked beside their hairy trunks. The beaten earth was swept and desolate. There was not even a shaving to be seen. In haste I went to the house, but the shutters were tight, the door was shut, and the outer bar and wooden padlock secure. For a moment I leant against the door. It would have been the giving up of hope to go. At last I roused myself, and went round the house to the lake. The water glimmered dully, but there were no boats drawn up on the shore. Here, too, all was swept and desolate. It seemed as if the work was finished.

I lingered by the shore, for I could not face the loneliness of a house and of other men's talk. I strained my eyes over the lake-shore searching for something, I knew not what, hoping where I knew there was no hope, and far away close to the edge of the dark water, I saw the shrouded figure of a woman crouched as if in pain. I went towards her hastily, and hearing my step, she turned and as I neared her, rose and stood hesitating. The moonlight lit up her face, and I saw she was a woman past middle life, but handsome still with the remains of blowzy beauty. She was so like and yet so unlike some woman that I had known

that I felt I must know her, and I cried aloud,

"Do not be afraid; it is I."

At that she came swiftly towards me and said,

"You seek Jesus, but he has gone. They are all gone. Jesus and his mother and his brothers."

As she spoke, some turn of the words told me who she was, in spite of the change in her. She was the wife of Zebedee, a bold-faced strap of a woman, clever and managing, whose boastfulness and egotism had turned many from her, though there had always been a coarse good-nature about her that inclined me to her. But her boldness had fallen from her now, and she trembled as she spoke, and I, seeing this, cried out,

"Oh, mother, what has befallen thee?" and at that she put her hand on my breast to steady herself and said,

"Oh, son, I am bewildered by many thoughts. I am in pain."

"Tell me, mother," I answered. "It may ease the pain." And at that, as if she could no longer hold her peace, she broke into speech.

"Jesus is gone," she cried. "And they said, the neighbours all said, that he was going to Jerusalem to take his crown. For it is rumoured everywhere that he is to be our king. So I, for am I not the wife of Zebedee, the owner of many boats? I dressed my hair and went forth to say farewell.

My two sons had been with him from the beginning, and who had a better right than I? The whole town had gathered together to see Jesus go. The courtyard was full, and Peter, boasting, tried to keep me back. 'We go to Jerusalem to a triumph,' he said. 'Do not trouble the Master. Soon he will be too great for the people of Capernaum.' But I pushed past him, and the neighbours seeing me, made way for me. Why should Peter have everything? As I went forward Jesus himself came out of the house alone, and stopped to put the lock on the bar. When he had pressed the pins home he turned, and seeing me, greeted me, and I cried out, 'Oh, Jesus, I am come to ask a favour.'

" 'Ask,' he said, for you know he is ever kind to us women, not like other men who think that beyond babes and household we are of no account. So I said, and my two sons James and John were there, one on either side of me,

" 'I ask that when you come to your kingdom these two sons of mine shall sit, one on your right and the other on the left hand of your throne,' and the neighbours, listening, said aloud, 'She has right. Is not Zebedee the owner of many boats?'

"But Jesus said, and his face was grave, grave and grey as the earth before sunrise, and at the sound of his voice silence fell on us all,

" 'Mistress, you know not what you ask.'

"Then I cried aloud, for I did not understand, and why should Peter and the others have all?

" 'Master, when you are king, the glories of your Kingdom will be yours to give to whom you please. When you make a feast, you will bid to it whom you will, and they will eat and drink at your table. I ask but this; that you will share this glory with my sons, that you will give them meat at your table, and that they, too, shall drink from your cup.' I had no shame in speaking thus, and the people all murmured in approval. Jesus turned to my two sons and said,

" 'Are you able to drink of the cup that I am about to drink?' And, I prompting them, they said,

" 'Yes, we are able.' Jesus turned to me again and looked me in the face. His eyes were steadfast, but it was then that this fear fell upon me. For it is not thus that kings look who go to take their kingdom.

" 'Oh, Mistress,' he said, 'I came not to be served, but to serve. Thy sons shall indeed drink of my cup, but glory is not mine to give. That will be given to whom God wills.' And with that he walked ahead, and the others followed. And with them went my two sons."

She crouched down on the shore again, and rocked herself to and fro.

"I have been dreaming," she cried. "Jesus has cast a spell on me. He is but a carpenter. How could such as he be King of the Jews?"

Then I, to comfort her, spoke, crouching beside her.

"Oh, mother," I said, "David was but a herd boy, and Jesus might well be King of the Jews. But his kingdom is not of this world."

"He has cast a spell on me," she repeated, unheeding. "For even now, though I saw him walk forth, and did ever king walk to his kingdom? I feel that there is power in him, and that he is great. Else, why should I be thus?"

For a moment she hid her face in her hands, and then she turned fiercely to me and said,

"Look you, when my two sons first joined him I was angry, for what was he but a workman like others? But, afterwards, when he was often about the house, I saw that there was something in him that was not in other men. He had a high way of looking at things that other men made mean, and I felt there was a great destiny for him. And if for him why not for my two sons? But what has become of my dreams? What have we done to him? He has changed. He used to be so gay with his talk of the kingdom that was coming,

but now when men say he goes to be king, the gaiety has gone out of him. He was more like a man going to his death than one who went to take a kingdom. Oh, son, what is going to become of us all?"

"Mother," I said, "men are not yet great enough to hold by the life that Jesus lives. It is too high for them. They grasp at it, but fall far past it. Jesus is master of life, but we, we are the servants of life. Whether he lives, or whether he dies, he is still master. For he knows, and we are ignorant."

"What does he know?" she whispered.

"He knows of the life of the spirit," I said.

"Was it that only he preached?" she asked. "Did he not always say he had to establish a kingdom?"

"Yes, mother, but not a kingdom like this world's kingdoms. It was a kingdom of love, where the greatest is the servant of all."

She pondered for a while, her head on her arms. Then she said, musing,

"There was that in his face that was dim to me. He sees something that other men are blind to. What is it that he has done to us? He has turned the world upside down. And I? Am I only a fool old woman? For I thought he was going to be king. And my two sons?" Suddenly her voice

broke into a wail. "What will become of my two sons? He said that they should drink of his cup. What cup did he mean?"

She shook me by the arm in her eagerness.

"Nay, mother," I answered. "How can I say? I go to Jerusalem after Jesus. The cup that he drinks, is it not good enough for thy two sons?"

"Is it death?" she cried, peering at me through the darkness.

"And what if it is?" I said, for I could not lie to her. "Thy sons may return, but Jesus——"

"He will never return. There was death in his face. He has taken them from me. My sons will be slain."

And with that she fell into bitter weeping and rocked herself to and fro.

XV

THE journey to Jerusalem was long to me. Beyond Magdala where the black hills begin to close in upon the lake we were delayed by the passing of camel trains laden with salt fish and bound for Ptolemais, while all the way the people going up to Jerusalem for the Passover thronged the roads and made haste impossible. We did not linger to see the beauty of Herod's new city of Tiberias. The black citadel above the town, the palace and theatre and forum were Greek, not Jewish, and the place was alien to us. The gaiety and clatter, the painted courtesans in their Greek clothing, and even the blue lake with its fleet of gaudy pleasure boats were sinister and strange. But indeed, at Tiberias and during the long journey south through the stony wastes of Judea, where only stringy, grey-green grass seemed to flourish, I saw little of what was around me. My mind had outstripped my body, and was entering Jerusalem with Jesus. What had happened to him?

Beyond Bethshan we caught up with more

camel trains, this time bound for Jerusalem with salt fish for the Passover. We made what haste we could, but as we neared the Damascus Gate the crowds grew thicker, and it was harder to press through them. It was the day before the Passover when we came out on the flat table-land above Jerusalem. Even then, when in the clear air of noon the Holy City set on the hills rose before us in all its glory of towers and bastions, I was in such haste to find Jesus that I had no mind to look at it. But somewhere on my inner eye that picture must have stamped itself, for to this day, if I but close my lids, I can see its wonder. On the side of the sea against the pale sky of spring the Tower of David still stands on Mount Sion, while over against the sun-rising the Citadel and Temple, high above the Valley of Giants, show Mount Olivet beyond. It seemed, indeed, the City of God, but it was out past that beauty that Jesus went to his death.

The steep streets of Jerusalem were full of people. Men talked together in groups angrily or earnestly, and moved restlessly from one group to another, blocking the way of those who wished to enter the City. I had never seen such restlessness in a Passover crowd, and my mind misgave me that the tumult and excitement boded ill to Jesus; so I slipped from my mule, and sending it

on with the men-servants, mixed with the throng to hear what men said.

The stream of people entering the City pressed down the narrow street towards the Temple. It was slow moving in that current, so I pushed out of it into the shelter of an archway, where I could stand a few steps above the crowd. A small group of men had already taken refuge in the courtyard within, where they debated noisily, heedless of the roar of the crowd without.

"The man is a dangerous rebel," I heard one say in the precise accent of the Scribes. "You have but to look at what he is doing and mark the people who follow him. You can then judge for yourself if he have any regard for the law."

"All Galileans are rebels and the encouragers of lawlessness," said another.

Hearing this I went into the courtyard and joined myself to the men, who, occupied solely with their dispute, paid no heed to me.

"Jesus is not unlawful, but he mars the path of the Priests. That is why they hate him," said a rough man in the coarse dialect of Galilee.

"I am no friend of the Priests, but I call rioting in the very courts of the Temple unlawful," put in another voice, and the Galilean answered hotly,

"It is the trading that is unlawful. Men have

no right to make a market of the courts. The Temple was meant for worship, not for money-making."

"He has right," said another. I could not see the speaker, but it was the voice of an old man. "It was not so in my day. The courts of the Temple grow more heathen every year. It is more like a street of booths than the entrance to a place of prayer. It is a scandal."

"They lack but one thing, a temple to Venus," said a fat man, with a laugh.

"Men must buy the sacrifices somewhere, and as for the money-changers, well, if the Priests will not take Roman money——" began another, but the Scribe cut him short.

"The bartering is wrong," he said. "I do not object to Jesus wishing to reform such things. I object to the way he does it."

"What ought he to have done?" asked the Galilean, and the other touched perhaps, by the scorn in his voice, answered, with some heat,

"He could have gone to those in authority. If he had pointed out to the High Priest what was wrong——"

The fat man slapped himself on the thigh and laughed aloud, and most of the other men joined in the laugh; for indeed it was common gossip that Annas drew rent from the booths.

"Jesus need not have whipped them out like dogs."

"How else could he have done it?" cried the Galilean. "Dogs they were, defiling the Temple. Can one reason with dogs?"

There was a murmur of assent, for there was great indignation in Jerusalem at the Priests' tolerance of evil, and at their pandering to the pagan customs of Rome.

The wily Scribe, seeing he had not carried many with him, hastily changed his ground, and said,

"Jesus may have right in this, but in other matters he goes too far. If we once admit his teaching, there will be an end to the law."

The Galilean opened his lips, but before he could reply another man broke in.

"That is true. There is no doubt he can sway the minds of men. There was a time when he attracted me; but he goes too far. He alarms people."

"What are you afraid of?" asked the Galilean; and the other, nettled by the tone of his voice, answered shortly,

"He preaches blasphemy."

"I have often heard him teach, but never blasphemy," the Galilean began, but the other interrupted,

"Were you in Jerusalem in the winter? No?

I thought as much. If you had been, as we were, you would have heard what all Jerusalem heard."

"I was in Jerusalem. I heard men say Jesus was mad," said one, and "I, too," said another, and "I heard he was possessed," said a third, so that the Galilean, taken aback by so much accord, could only answer doggedly,

"Jesus never preached blasphemy."

"Not only did he preach it, but he was nearly stoned for it. He slipped away by a back path and escaped," said the man who had first spoken of blasphemy.

"Did you hear him yourself?" demanded the Galilean, fiercely. And the other answered reluctantly,

"I was not there myself. But I was told by a friend who was." The triumphant Galilean laughed aloud and cried out scornfully,

"Is there one here who himself heard Jesus teach blasphemy?" And unexpectedly the Scribe replied,

"I heard."

There was a silence, and then the Galilean said,

"Tell us what he said," and the others joining in urged, "Yes, tell us what he said."

"He said that he and God were one," said the Scribe,

There was another silence, and the men crowded nearer to the speaker.

"Go on," said a voice eagerly.

"The people who heard were angry, and took up stones to stone him, but he asked for which of the good deeds which he had done were they going to slay him. 'For no good deed,' the men replied, 'but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself out to be God.' "

The Scribe stopped again, and the Galilean said impatiently, "What did Jesus answer?"

"He asked if it did not stand written in the law, 'I said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.' The men said it was so written, and then Jesus asked them, if those to whom God's word was spoken were called gods, why did they say that he whom God had sent as a messenger was blaspheming when he said he was God's son. It was after that that they tried to arrest him, but he got away."

"He is very clever. He got out of it neatly," said the fat man.

"I see no blasphemy in that," said the Galilean, but with more doubt.

"It is blasphemy. He ought to be stoned," said a hard voice that I had not heard before.

"No—no. It is wrong to take life, and there

is great wisdom in his other teaching," said the old man.

"Jesus will lose his life for all that," repeated the hard voice.

"Who will dare to lay a hand on him?" asked the Galilean fiercely.

"Our Rulers. He talks too much of the need for clean sweeps and not patching old garments," replied the merciless voice.

"His followers have grown, and now comes this clearing of the Temple courts. The Council will surely arrest him," said the Scribe.

"They must reckon with us Galileans first," said the Galilean stoutly; and with this there broke out a tumult of so many voices that I could not hear what the men said. But I had learnt enough, and sick at heart I went forth into the noise of the street to seek Nicodemus, and consult with him what could be done.

Now the house of Nicodemus lay close to that of Caiaphas, and their courtyards adjoined. Here on Mount Zion there was not so great a throng, so that as I went to the gate of Nicodemus and one coming in haste from the courtyard of Caiaphas knocked up against me as if he were blind, I looked up in wonder, and behold it was Judas Iscariot.

I seized him by the arm.

"Judas," I cried, "you are the very man I would speak with. Come apart here," and I drew him aside into an embrasure where there was a stone seat. He resisted a little.

"I am in haste," he said, but I overbore him.

"I will not keep you, Judas, but I must see Jesus. He is in danger. Where is he?" I said.

"Jesus? I do not know," he answered reluctantly.

"Where does he lodge?" I asked.

"Lower down on the Mount. At the house of John. But of late he has taken to sleep on the Mount of Olives. At least he spends the nights there. For aught I know he may be there now. No. He cannot, for he has asked us all to sup with him to-night. I mean those who were first called," he added hastily, and I, wondering at the confusion of his speech and somewhat hurt at this exclusion of me, answered,

"I must see him. No. Not now, after the supper. Where will he be then?"

Judas looked at me with a horror growing in his eyes.

"He will surely be in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is at the foot of the Mount of Olives. You reach it from the Temple. By the Golden Gate."

"Of course, I know where the Garden is," I said,

wondering still more, and then I put my wonder aside and told him what I had just heard. When I had finished he sat silent for a moment.

Then he began to speak.

"He throws away all his chances. We Judeans are not roused as easily as the Galileans, yet only the other day he entered Jerusalem with triumph such as few men have known. But he would not follow it up. I could not make him see that the Jews want a king, not new teaching. I urged, but he would not act. He had but to lift his hand, and he would have been the leader of a following that would have swept Pilate and the Romans into the sea. After that, could he not have dealt with the Priests? But he must needs go and clear the courts of the Temple now, now, before he has an army to back him."

Amazed at his talk when I had just told him Jesus was in danger, I said,

"Jesus does not want any but a spiritual kingdom."

Judas looked at me askance.

"He cannot be such a fool," he said.

"It is not folly, but the way out of folly," I answered, but Judas had ceased to listen. He sat bent forward, his elbow on his knee, and as his custom was, he gnawed his knuckles. Suddenly

he straightened himself and said swiftly as if he argued with some one,

"He lacks strength to make himself king. His followers are falling away. Some even of the disciples have left him. When others would take him by force and make him a king he goes away and hides, yes, hides."

His eyes began to glow with their old fanatical light.

"The Pharisees have put this talk of blasphemy about for their own ends, but Jesus will not come out into the open and deny it. If he would but lead us now when the city is full of Galileans, instead of being half-a-dozen unknown men, we should occupy Jerusalem at the head of thousands. The Romans are a mere handful, and would flee before us. But Jesus is too soft."

"Cannot you see how great he is, Judas?" I asked.

Judas moved uneasily.

"No man has greater powers," he said. "Other Deliverers have failed, but Jesus could free us if he willed. If I had but half his power, I would never lay down my arms till we had obtained our freedom. Is this the time to preach love when the Romans have us in their grip? If he is left to go his own way, they will rule for ever. I tell you there is but one . . ."

He bit off his words and was silent. Then I, prompting him, for he seemed as one who talks in his sleep, said,

"Yes, Judas. One way? You said?"

He passed his hand over his eyes bewildered.

"It is naught," he said. Then, rising, he added as if to reassure himself,

"Jesus will not heed me. But we will see. I have done what I could."

"I, too, will do what I can," I said. "I go to see the High Priest." At that I stopped, amazed at the fear that sprang into the eyes of Judas, and thinking that he feared for Jesus, I added,

"Caiaphas was my father's friend. If I tell him I am a friend of Jesus, he may listen."

The fear died out of the eyes of Judas.

"You will not find him now," he said wearily, again as if he spoke in his sleep.

"How do you know? Have you seen him?" I asked, astonished.

"I? Why should I see the High Priest?" said Judas hastily; then, warily, as a man picks his steps across shaking ground, he added,

"Men say there is a Council meeting to-night. I do not know. Why should I know of such things? I must go. I shall be missed at the Supper." And abruptly without further parley, he went on his way.

XVI

NOW Annas, who had been High Priest, was a man of a little soul and a great lover of money. He loved empire too, and abusing the liberty which the Romans allowed our Council, he had usurped the power of the Procurator, and had put men to death without obtaining the Roman assent. Because of this unlawfulness the Procurator had forced the Council to take away from him the High Priesthood, but he, by scheming, had seen to it that the office passed to his son-in-law Caiaphas, so that the supremacy, in seeming lost to Annas, was still in his family, and he himself had held great authority. But he was an old man now, and most of the real power lay in the hands of Caiaphas. It was him I had to see. When Judas had left me I did not at once go to his door. The talk with Judas had troubled me, and I sat on thinking. There was something hidden from me, and I felt that new danger threatened Jesus. If I could but read the mind of Judas I should know what it was. But I was like a man who sees a light floating in the mist and strains after it, only

to find it move further off. So after a time I gave it up, and went to the house of the High Priest.

Caiaphas was a man of a fierce countenance, and tall above the height of other men. There was no flesh on his bones, his lips were thin, and his nose like the beak of a hawk. His eyes, too, were hawk's eyes, and could hood themselves at will, hiding his mind. There was no suppleness in any part of him. When I found myself before him, and we had greeted one another, he looked at me out of his hard eyes.

"It is an ill time for you to be in Jerusalem. You would be better away. The city is full of tumultuous doings." He spoke coldly, and in his voice was an edged warning.

"I have just come from the Lebanon. I would speak with you alone," I said. Caiaphas turned and told the men-servants who were in the room to stand aside, and they did so. When we were alone he said sternly,

"I have heard much of you. You are known to have been in ill company, and the rumour has done you no good."

"Do you mean Jesus? He is my friend," I said, my heart waxing hot within me.

"He is a dangerous friend. For your father's sake I would bear much from you, but do not try

my patience too far. You have always been one of those who are too fond of innovations. It would be better for you to return to the Lebanon, and leave this Jesus to his reward. He is a rash guide for youth."

I was angry at this.

"Who says he is dangerous?" I cried out.

"I say it. He is leading the people astray."

"You have talked with him yourself?" I asked.

"I have never seen him," he answered haughtily.

"How, then, do you know that he is leading the people astray?"

"I have heard of this kingdom that he preaches," said Caiaphas, a glow of anger in his eyes at my persistence. "He is stirring the people up to upset the law and destroy all order. The nation was peaceful and there was no agitation before he came, but his teaching is making men discontented."

"The teaching of the Kingdom is in our own Scriptures," I said.

"Why, then, does Jesus tell the people that their rulers will not welcome it? Do not we also read the Prophets? What can this man teach that we do not know?"

"You have not taught the people what you

know," I answered boldly, and Caiaphas, resting his eyes on me for a moment, answered,

"How can the ignorant be taught the law? Can the poor man bear rule? Jesus knows nothing of government. He would bring calamities of all kinds upon us. The wise man must rule, and wisdom comes by opportunity of leisure. How shall he get leisure that mindeth the plough and whose talk is of bullocks?"

His voice was that of a man who reasons with a child.

"Does not bearing rule over others destroy wisdom?" I asked.

Caiaphas looked at me as if I uttered madness,

"Does Jesus preach such folly?" he said, and I answered,

"Jesus would have the wise teach those who are ignorant, and the strong help those who are weak."

Caiaphas was silent for a moment, and when he spoke it was with impatience.

"How could such a kingdom stand? Jesus forgets the nature of man. Envy and greed, hatred and malice, are human. If the people follow his doctrine nothing will be restrained from them that they have imagined to do, and how shall the State be maintained? There will not be a man left who will till the ground. No. If you would have

peace in your borders, it must be by the rule of the strong."

Caiaphas spoke as if this were the only truth. His certainty staggered me, and for a moment I was almost convinced by the wisdom of this world. Then suddenly I seemed to see the face of Jesus and the kindliness in his eyes, and the vision so moved me that I cried out,

"Jesus teaches that love is a greater power than fear."

At this Caiaphas looked at me sternly.

"You are indeed besotted by this man. You do not see him as he is. I will tell you the secret of Jesus. He wants to sweep away all old things. This new wine of his must not be put in old bottles. For why? Because Jesus will allow none to bear rule but himself. So, forsooth, we must all make a fresh start."

"He means a fresh start in the hearts of men. It is the law of love," I said.

The thin lips of Caiaphas were set tight.

"It is the law of rebellion," he said, "and the Council will deal with it." And at that I spoke out.

"Men read his teaching wrong. They have reported it wrong to you. I have never heard Jesus preach aught but peace and love."

"Cannot I judge for myself? Is it for such as

you to teach the High Priest?" he said insolently. This angered me, but I heeded it not, and being afraid for Jesus, humbled myself and laid aside the fury of my mind.

"Jesus is my friend," I said, "and I love him. For my sake, will you not show mercy?"

Caiaphas answered not a word. His eyes met mine, and we looked at one another. Then I fell back a step, for I saw I had lost my case before I had stated it. Caiaphas was not merciful. The pain of other men did not vibrate within his soul. One note will answer to another if plucked on a different instrument, but the lifeless strings made more response than he. He could watch the heart being torn from out the living body of a man, and not feel one echoing pang. Yet nothing in his nature made him ashamed, for he did not know himself. On the smooth rock of his self-ignorance I could make no mark. As well might one strive with naked hands to tear down the foundations of Zion. But I could not leave him without one more effort to save Jesus.

"Caiaphas," I said, "you have warned me. I, too, would warn you. There is danger for you. It will not be easy to crush Jesus, for the people love him. He has many followers."

Caiaphas looked at me.

"All his followers do not love him," he said.

With that something that had been hiding in the depths of my soul rose and possessed me. The light after which I had strained suddenly lit up my mind, and I knew the truth. Judas had betrayed Jesus. He had seen Caiaphas, and they had a plan between them. For a moment more I looked into the eyes of the High Priest, and then I turned and went from his presence.

I found Nicodemus in an inner room of his house, and with him was Joseph of Arimathea. They were both perturbed. Joseph, like Nicodemus, was a Ruler of Israel, and all men trusted him because of his uprightness. Now his broad frank face was troubled, and his kindly eyes clouded. As I told my tale his fingers were in his curly brown beard, twisting it anxiously.

When I had finished he said,

"Judas may be in league with Caiaphas, but I do not see how that will profit them now. The Council cannot act at once. The Passover is too near. Even if Caiaphas arrested Jesus to-night, and the Council examined him and concluded the trial early to-morrow, it would still be too late to kill him. Before sentence is passed a day must elapse, and by that time it will be the Passover. They cannot condemn him during the feast; but when it is over and the city quiet again they will

surely try to take him. Therefore we must get him away at once."

So it was settled. Nicodemus was to go to the house of John close by on Mount Zion, to see if Jesus was still there. Joseph would order mules to be sent out of the city, and I, seeing that Judas had said Jesus might be in the Garden of Gethsemane, was to seek him there and warn him.

"The gates close at sunset," said Joseph. "You will have time to get out by the Golden Gate of the Temple if you hasten. When you have found Jesus withdraw him to Bethany where the mules will meet you. Once we have him in the north we can hide him till this is blown over. Hasten now, or the gates will be shut."

So I, for the second time that day, pressed through the narrow streets and heedless of the tumult, ground against the crowd, pushing on till I came to the courts of the Temple. Here I passed out by the Golden Gate, and stood outside the wall above the steep valley of Jehoshaphat, on the other side of which was Mount Olivet.

XVII

THE valley of Jehoshaphat is so deep that a man can scarce climb up or down on his hands and feet, and on its other side the road comes steep and narrow from the Mount of Olives to the brook Kedron. It was nigh sunset when I crossed the stream, and began to clamber up the hill between the gnarled trunks of the olive trees. The Garden of Gethsemane was sunk in silence. I heard no voice, I saw no one, and, despite myself, I slackened my pace and steadied my breathing. In such a quiet the tumult and evil of the city were but a dream. God himself might walk in that stillness and beauty in the cool of the evening.

Near the top of the mountain, where the olive trees fall away and the rough stone wall follows the bend of the hill, I came out into the open. The sun was setting and the evening shadows lay on the land. To the east, beyond the bald grey slopes of the Wilderness, the Mountains of Moab were deepening into amethyst and purple, and in the abyss the bright blue of the Dead Sea dark-

ened into black. The glow in the west dyed the towers of Jerusalem rose-red, and split on the flat rocks outside the walls as if a fire burnt over them. In the clear light it seemed that one might throw a stone into the Courts of the Temple, but no sound from within the city floated over to this height. It was a land barren and desolate, but beautiful with an exceeding great beauty. For a moment I stood forgetting my mission lost in the glory before me, and then I felt a hand laid on my shoulder and turning I saw Jesus. At the sight of his face my welfare passed away as a cloud, and misery possessed my soul. An immense loneliness lay upon him, and in his eyes was desolation. Seeing my distress he bent and kissed me, and, his hand still on my shoulder, asked after my well-being, but I could not answer, for I remembered his danger, and shame was upon me.

"Jesus," I stammered, "I have come to warn you. I have seen Caiaphas, and you must flee."

His grip tightened on my shoulder.

"Where shall I flee?" he asked. "Can a man flee from the will of God? If I climb up to heaven his hand shall take me, if I dig into hell is he not there also?" and at that I knew I should not prevail.

"It is death if you stay," I whispered.

"God is our guide even unto death," he an-

swered, and then a great trembling fell upon him, so that he shook beside me, and I trembled too, afraid to speak.

"My soul is full of trouble, but what can I say?" he cried. "I have prayed to God to save me, but it may be for his purpose that I have come to this hour. He gave me command what to say and in what words to speak, and I have given the message. If I must die I obey, for in obedience to him is the life of the ages. But I am in fear."

The sweat broke out on his face, and I, sick at heart at his woe, could only hold my peace and listen, helpless.

"God has forsaken me. I have fallen out of the knowledge of his purpose, and the fear of death is upon me. I pray, but there is no answer. I cry, but no one hears. I am shut out of the world of the spirit. I wander in desolate places, and cannot find my way."

I loved him so that it seemed as if the barrier set between soul and soul broke suddenly, and there came upon me a wide rushing in of waters as his desolation rolled itself over me.

"Is there no way of escape? Must you die?" I cried, but he answered,

"The gifts of God cannot be cast away. If he gives death, shall I not take it?" And then he cried out with a loud and bitter cry,

"I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst. I have poured out my soul, and no man heeds. Oh my people what have I done that you will not love me? What more ought I to do? My soul grieves for you because you are blind in your hearts, but in what have I afflicted you that you will not see?"

The sweat poured down his face, and he wiped it off with his sleeve.

"I have shown men the way of life, but they will not have me as their king. They have chosen hate, not love, and how shall I save them from the agony that must come upon them? They know not what they do. It is not me they reject, but God."

When he had said this he went forward and stood and leaned his hand on the wall, looking out over the Wilderness. The deep blue of the Dead Sea was black now, and grey clouds covered the Mountains of Moab. The red glow still lingered over Jerusalem. Then it too died away, and darkness was upon us.

Jesus stood there silent, watching the colour die from the earth, and I stood behind him, silent also, waiting. When he spoke again I saw that he was far from me.

"It is defeat," he said. "Even those whom God has given me have not seen my meaning. I

am to be reckoned among the lawless. But the world is not left without a judge, for when men understand the message they will judge themselves, and in sorrow will unite to bring the kingdom to pass. Hate cannot be triumphant. It is too feeble. It has none save itself to rejoice in victory. But love, being born of God, is strong and courageous to suffer. I fail, but others will conquer, for God yet liveth."

A tawny owl swept out from under the dark trees, and swooped past into the valley seeking its meat. Jesus watched its flight, and then he said,

"The world is beautiful, and it is hard to die. I have seen death come to other men, and now it comes to me. I cannot put aside that fear. It is a way that all must pass," and then he turned to me and said,

"I go apart alone. No man can help me now, but surely God will listen?"

And he left me and went away across the open, and passed into the shadow under the crooked boughs of the olives.

I sat there under the wall listening to the noises of the night. The brown owls swept like ghosts across the open, and one by one the stars came out and shone in the firmament above me. I must

have slept, for, suddenly, I started and sprang to my feet, feeling that time had passed and that something was about to happen. The brown owls had gone, and all was quiet. I strained my eyes across the valley to where the great wall of the Temple rose in the darkness, and beyond the wall, in the Courts of the Temple, I saw lights appear one by one and move to and fro as if carried by men. There came a glare of torches, and of a sudden the lights went out and in a moment came again, this time with the wall behind them. They had passed the gate.

A step sounded near by, and Jesus stood beside me, tall in the dim light.

"See," he said, "they are coming out to take me. Let us be going." And then he said,

"This will be farewell," and he kissed me and led the way down the mountain, and I, dazed, followed him.

Near the bottom of the garden, in a dip of the hill, we found Peter and James and John asleep, and Jesus waked them.

"I would you could sleep on and take your rest," he said. "But the hour has come and Judas is at hand."

The clatter of armed men rose from the steep valley, and the lights disappeared in the hollow where the brook Kedron ran. Jesus went for-

ward down the narrow path, and we went after him. He stopped in a place where the olive trees thinned, and we stood round him. In a moment the lights appeared again, held high, to let the men see their steps. The glare of the torches lit up the face of the foremost man, and showed him to be one of the officers of the Temple. Close behind came Judas Iscariot. The officer, seeing us waiting, paused in uncertainty, and made a step towards James, but Judas muttered, "No, not him," and coming up to Jesus stooped and took his hand as if to kiss it. Jesus laid his hand on his arm, and looked him in the eyes. Then he leant forward and kissed Judas on the cheek.

"Friend," he said, "do what you have come for."

Then the men came and took hold of Jesus and held him firmly, and at that Peter, excited, thrust forward with a great sword in his hand. But Jesus said sternly,

"Put up that sword, Peter. Have I not told you that they that trust to the sword shall perish by the sword?"

At his rebuke Peter fell back, and Jesus said to the officers of the Temple,

"Why have you come out with swords and staves to take me as if I were a robber? Have I

not taught openly day by day in the Temple, and yet you did not arrest me?"

The men did not answer, and Jesus said no more, but went with them down the hill, and Peter and I followed. But Judas stayed behind in the olive garden.

XVIII

THE men led Jesus by way of the path outside the south wall to the house of the High Priest on Mount Zion. It was past midnight. Balilla, the woman who kept the gate, opened it, and the men brought Jesus into the courtyard. I spoke to her (for she knew me), and she let me follow with Peter. When we were inside the gate the men began to debate whether it was Annas or Caiaphas for whom they had to ask, and one said where was Judas Iscariot, who knew. But Judas was not there, so they agreed to ask for the High Priest only and leave it to the servants to decide between Annas and Caiaphas. Then they took Jesus across the courtyard to the door of the house where they were told that the High Priest slept.

"We had orders to bring this man before him," said the Chief of the Temple officials.

"Wait, then, till I rouse the High Priest," said the servant, and the men took Jesus apart into a corner of the courtyard where they guarded him so that none could come to speech of him.

The servants of the High Priest came out from the house to stare at Jesus and to ask curious questions of the men, and soon there came a cry from the doorway that Annas waited within, and the men hastily rose and led Jesus inside, and as many of us as could crowded after him.

Annas sat in the inner-room. The men led Jesus before him and stationed him there with the Temple officials on either side of him. The High Priest (as some still held him to be) was old and bent. The skin on his bony hands was the soft, wrinkled skin of the aged, and his voice was cracked and wavering. He began to question the men as to who Jesus was and why they had taken him, and when they had answered he turned to Jesus.

"What have you to say for yourself?" he asked. "You are accused of breaking the law. Have you any excuse to offer?"

Jesus looked steadily at the old man, and said, "You know it is against the law for you to question me thus in private and at this hour. Where are those who are to witness against me?"

At this Annas fell into a perturbation and moved his hands uneasily to and fro, playing with the fringes of his garments, as if he did not know what to do. The men seeing his hesitation looked one at another as if they, too, were disturbed.

Annas had all his life carried out the law, and the Temple officials had obeyed his orders and they knew that Jesus was in the right. The law forbade trial for life unless in full daylight, openly before the Council, and with all those witnesses present who were to accuse the prisoner.

At last Annas said,

"I do not know about this business, for Caiaphas has it in hand. He ought to have been brought before Caiaphas."

There was a note of complaint in his voice, and growing more certain as he saw a way out of his difficulty, he said with decision,

"Yes. Take him to Caiaphas." And then as the men turned to lead Jesus away, he added,

"It would be better to bind him lest he escape. Bind him now and take him away."

Some one brought a cord and the men bound Jesus. Then, making obeisance to Annas, they led Jesus to the Hall of Caiaphas, where the Council sometimes met, and which adjoined the house of the High Priest. Here we waited. And in a short time Caiaphas entered and took his seat at the head of the room. His mien was that of a man who has made up his mind, and his voice was hard and determined as he called for the prisoner to be led forward. The men brought

Jesus forward alertly as if the certainty in the mien of Caiaphas gave them security also.

Caiaphas fixed his hawk's eyes on Jesus, and looked him up and down, examining the disorder of his clothing where the rope bound his arms tightly to his sides. Then he said,

"You are called Jesus of Nazareth, I believe?" and Jesus answered,

"I am he."

Caiaphas went on.

"You claim to be a prophet and to have a message for the world? And you alone? Where are your followers?"

Jesus did not reply. His eyes met those of the High Priest gravely and sadly, but he made no answer, and Caiaphas, irritated, demanded,

"Are you aware that you are here to answer with your life for the harm that you have done? Do you refuse to reply when I question you as to your teaching?"

Jesus answered gently,

"I never taught in secret. I spoke openly to all the world. I taught always in public places, in the synagogues, and in the Courts of the Temple where the Jews meet daily."

There came a certain sternness into his voice, and he asked,

"Why do you question me? It is illegal. Ask

those who heard me teach. They know what I said."

A great anger flamed into the face of Caiaphas and he half rose from his seat. Seeing this, one of the officials raised his hand and struck Jesus a blow on the mouth.

"How dare you answer the High Priest so?" he said.

The blood ran down the face of Jesus and he could not wipe it off because his arms were bound, but he answered without resentment,

"If I have taught what is wrong bring witness to give evidence against me openly before the Council. If I am right in asking this, why do you smite me?"

At this Caiaphas fell into a rage, and motioning to the men, said grimly,

"Take him away. He shall have his witnesses. Lead him outside now and guard him, and they shall be found and the Council called."

So the men took Jesus into the courtyard and led him to the corner-seat where they had guarded him before, and before they had well settled down again we saw the messengers go forth from Caiaphas.

"They go for the witnesses," said one of the officials, and the others laughed and said that Caiaphas was not one to let the grass grow under his

feet, and then they called to the servants saying that the night was cold; so the servants brought out a brazier and charcoal for a fire at which the men could warm themselves. They all stood near Jesus in the firelight and talked, but Jesus sat silent, his face white, save where the blood had dried upon it.

"The cheek of him asking for witnesses!" said one of the men. "You would think he was a great lord the way he spoke.' And another said,

"Caiaphas will soon show him his place. What is he but a peasant, no better than us?" And suddenly one of the men came close to Jesus, and said,

"Why don't you play the prophet if you are a prophet?" and he winked at one of his companions who struck Jesus a quick blow on the back of the head, and cried out, "Who struck you? If you are a prophet tell us."

I started forward, but Balilla, the portress, who stood beside me, caught me by the arm.

"You will do no good," she whispered. "He is in their power. You will only make it worse for him."

I saw that it was true and that I could do nothing. I stood with a great bitterness in my soul and watched while the men tied a kerchief round

the eyes of Jesus and then played their game, one after the other buffeting him and calling out,

"Come! Play the prophet. Who struck you?"

Now whether it was that time hung heavy on her hands, or whether for pity for Jesus she wished to make a diversion I know not, but Balilla began to question Peter, who sat by the fire, and I heard him answer in his gruff voice. Soon they fell into a dispute, and I heard her say,

"But surely you also are one of his followers?"

Peter answered in confusion,

"What do you mean? I don't understand."

And she asked,

"Were you not also with this Jesus, the Galilean?"

The men, who had grown tired of their game, now plucked the kerchief from the eyes of Jesus and pressed round to listen, and one said to Peter,

"Of course you belong to them. You are a Galilean too. Just listen to your accent."

And Peter hastily replied,

"I am not one of them."

The official who had arrested Jesus came forward to stir the fire, and said:

"But I myself saw you in the garden with him."

And at that Peter, cursing, rose and said,

"I tell you I do not even know the man."

The charcoal in the brazier glowing more bright-

ly for a moment lit up the faces of those round the fire and fell on the sad eyes of Jesus, who sat watching Peter. Peter, as if moved by some inner force, turned and looked at Jesus. I know not what passed between them, but suddenly Peter put his forearm up as a man does who shields his eyes from the blinding of the sun, and then he spun round, and stumbling went across the courtyard. I caught him in the gateway. The light of the lantern fell on his face as he fumbled with the latch. From his eyes with their red rims his soul looked forth as from a prison and the tears were streaming down his cheeks.

"I boasted," he cried. "And he said I should forsake him. But I followed, though I was afraid. You saw for yourself that I followed. And now I have denied him. Let me go. Let me go. I must be alone."

So I released him and he went.

By this time it was near daylight, and soon there came more stir as members of the Council began to pass through the courtyard, and the messengers returned guarding those who were to witness against Jesus. It was full day when the order came to bring Jesus again into the Hall of Caiaphas.

Here Caiaphas was waiting, sitting in the high seat of the Judge, and ranged in a half-circle on

either side of him sat the Council. It was not the full Council, but only some of the members, and among them few whom I knew, save Joseph of Arimathea, who came late and in haste. Jesus was stood in the place of the prisoner and the witnesses were brought forward. Then Caiaphas rose, and with him rose the members of the Council, for the oath was to be taken by the witnesses.

The High Priest took the roll of the law from the official who held it ready, and unrolling it, he read aloud that great warning to those about to bear witness.

"Forget not, O witness, that this is a trial for life. In a money suit, if thy witness be wrong money may repair that wrong. But in this trial, if thou sin, the blood of the accused and the blood of his seed to the end of time shall be imputed to thee. For a man from one seal may strike off many impressions and each of them shall be exactly like the other. But the King of Kings, the Holy and the Blessed has made the forms of all men so that no one is wholly like to any other. Wherefore let us believe that the world was created for such a man as he whose life now hangs upon thy words."

The witnesses listened, standing in a little group. Their eyes wandered as they started round

the Hall and one man picked his teeth with a pin.

Caiaphas, having finished this reading, asked the men if after hearing these words they felt able to swear, and an official whispering to them, they stood in more order and repeated one after the other,

"I will nevertheless swear," and prompted by the official, added,

"By the Lord, the God of Heaven."

Then Caiaphas read aloud,

"Be warned that the oath which you take is not according to your own mind but to the mind of God and of this Court. As Moses said, 'Not with you only do I make this Covenant and this oath, but with God who standeth here with us this day.' "

After this the witnesses swore and then they began to give evidence. But the evidence did not agree. If one man witnessed that Jesus had said he was the Messiah, another said No, he said he was to be King of the Jews, and so they went on, one saying one thing and the next a different, till it seemed as if there was no end to their differences. The brows of Caiaphas knitted themselves and the members of the Council grew worried, but no progress was made. At last there

came two men who witnessed that they had themselves heard Jesus speak in the Courts of the Temple and that he had claimed magical powers, saying, "I will destroy this Temple made with hands and in three days I will build another made without hands."

When the High Priest heard this he said to Jesus,

"What is the meaning of this that these men witness against you? Do you still answer nothing?"

But Jesus held his peace, and Joseph of Arimathea rose in his place, and spoke, and because of the respect in which men held him Caiaphas dare not stop him.

"The prisoner is right in refusing to answer. The law does not allow such cross-examination. It leans always to mercy and urges any member of the Council who can do so to speak in favour of the accused. Therefore I say that the words of Jesus were in this wise. That if the Temple made with hands was pulled down, God could still be worshipped in the soul of man, a sanctuary built without hands. For Solomon himself, the builder of the Temple, said, 'Will God indeed dwell in this Temple? Behold! the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Him, much less this house

that I have builded.' Jesus taught that there is that which is greater than any Temple, and that God asks men to give mercy not sacrifices. I maintain that these witnesses misunderstood, and that as no two testimonies agree together the Prisoner must be dismissed."

At this Caiaphas was seized with passion, and casting all law aside he sprang to his feet and cried out to Jesus,

"I adjure you by the name of the Most High that you tell us whether you are the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?"

And Jesus answered,

"If I tell you you will not believe me. Nor if I question you in my own defence will you release me."

Then Caiaphas called out,

"Are you the Son of God?"

And Jesus said,

"You say that I am."

Caiaphas caught his outer garment and tore it straight from throat to hem, crying out to the Council,

"He has spoken blasphemy. What further need is there for witnesses? Behold! you have all heard him. What think you? Is he worthy of death?"

The members of the Council rose to their feet,

and Caiaphas in haste turned to the right and put the question to the first man,

"For death or for life?" And the man answered,

"For death."

And so they all replied, save Joseph of Arimathea, who answered,

"For life."

Then the whole company of them rose up and brought Jesus to Pilate.

XIX

JERUSALEM was awake when Caiaphas and the Council went forth from the courtyard with Jesus. The people seeing the High Priest and a prisoner guarded by the officials of the Temple were curious to know what had happened, and many of them followed us to the Prætorium. The Romans had made their Government House of the palace that Herod had built for himself on the north-west hill, and here, protected by the city walls and by its three great towers, in the midst of gardens and groves and courts, Pilate lodged when he was in Jerusalem. On the lowest terrace of the hill, below the banqueting halls and colonnades of the Palace, was the Roman Tribunal. A row of broad, shallow steps led from the Place to its wide portico, and Caiaphas halted almost under the shadow of the marble pillars. At his order one of the servants of the Temple called aloud, and in answer a Roman soldier came out of the Tribunal into the portico and stood looking down on us. The bare knees that showed beneath his kilted petticoat and the beardless face

under the shining helmet marked him as of another race than ours, and there was some insolence in the way he glanced up and down our ranks, and seeing Jesus bound called out "Bring the prisoner into the Judgment Hall. My lord Pilate is at work within."

The official of the Temple answered, "We cannot enter the Judgment Hall. It is the Eve of the Passover and we should be defiled."

The soldier, puzzled, looked for a moment as if he were about to laugh, and at that Caiaphas himself stepped forward and said peremptorily, "Tell the Procurator that the High Priest waits without."

Whereupon the manner of the soldier changed, and he turned swiftly and went within.

The people had thronged behind us and the Place was now full, but there was silence save for the sound of their movements as we waited for Pilate. Soon we heard the ring of steps on the marble pavement and the Roman guard marched out and ranged itself. Then Pilate came forth from the Judgment Hall. The guard saluted as he passed into the portico, but there was no answering cheer from the crowd. Even when he came forward and stood on the top of the steps the hostile throng before him was silent.

Pilate was in his soldier's dress but bare headed.

His short, black hair and shaven face with its keen eyes showed that he, too, like the soldier was of another and more masterful breed than the Jews. As his eyes searched our faces there was no insolence in his gaze, but neither was there any friendliness. It was the cool scrutiny of a conqueror weighing the force of the conquered. When he caught sight of Caiaphas he greeted him with courtesy, and the High Priest returned the greeting, saying

"It is the Eve of the Passover, Pilate. We cannot enter the Palace."

"It was for that reason I came out. I know your customs," said Pilate.

"We have brought a prisoner to you for judgment," said Caiaphas.

"Is not judgment also forbidden you on the eve of your feasts?" Pilate asked.

"This is a special case," Caiaphas said harshly, and Pilate answered urbanely,

"That is for you to decide," and he gave orders that the judgment seat be brought, and when the soldiers had brought it from the Judgment Hall and placed it in the portico in sight of all the people, he took his seat. Then commanding silence (for before he was well seated the Priests had begun to accuse Jesus) the Procurator ordered the officials of the Temple to bring Jesus forward to

where he could face his accusers. The men cleared a space and Jesus came forward. He showed no sign of fear, nor was his bearing that of one who pleads. His face was tranquil and his eyes calm. Pilate watched him for a moment with interest, and then he turned to the High Priest and Rulers and, intent on the business in hand, asked formally,

"What accusation do you bring against this man?"

Caiaphas replied sharply, "If he were not a criminal we should not have brought him to you. He has spoken blasphemy."

Pilate looked at the High Priest coldly.

"Why then do you not take him yourselves and judge him according to your own laws? You have the power."

The High Priest answered,

"It is a capital charge and we have no power to put him to death."

"Of what do you accuse him?" Pilate again asked.

"He says he is our Messiah, the Son of the Blessed," said the High Priest.

Pilate shrugged his shoulders.

"I have told you that that is not a question for Roman law. You have power to judge your own heresies."

At this a turmoil broke out amongst the friends of the High Priest and they all began to speak at once, accusing Jesus of every manner of crime, so that it was impossible to hear clearly even what accusations they were bringing.

Pilate made an effort to restore order, but no man heeded, and so he sat listening contemptuously, waiting for the speakers to exhaust themselves. His eyes wandered to where Jesus stood, listening also, but without contempt. The interest in Pilate's eyes quickened as he looked at him, and suddenly he turned to the priests and fiercely commanded them to be silent. Before his decision the tumult ceased and, when there was silence, Pilate spoke to Jesus, and there was much irony in his voice as he asked,

"Do you not hear the number of heresies they accuse you of? Have you no wish to reply?"

Jesus shook his head but made no other answer, and Caiaphas stood forth from amongst the priests and rulers and said,

"It is not for a crime of heresy that we bring him before you, but for a crime of State."

"Then why did you say it was for blasphemy?" Pilate asked Caiaphas sternly.

For a moment the hidden enmity between them leapt into light, but Caiaphas controlled his anger and said,

"He has committed blasphemy against our law, but we have brought him to you because we found him preaching sedition against the Emperor, saying that he himself is our King."

At this Pilate, amazed, turned again to Jesus and examined him carefully, looking at the disorder of his garments and the blood and dust upon his face. Then, half smiling, as if he doubted whether the accusation was serious, he said to Caiaphas,

"Do you say that this man claims to be a King?" and Caiaphas answered, lying,

"He has prevented people paying taxes to the Emperor and says that he is the King of the Jews."

Again Pilate looked upon Jesus, and Jesus gravely returned his gaze. Then Pilate said,

"If this is true I will question him inside the Judgment Hall." And rising he called the centurion in charge of the guard and told him to bring Jesus within. So the officers of the Temple handed Jesus over to the soldiers and he passed from the power of the priests to that of the Roman Emperor.

I went into the Hall behind the soldiers and saw Pilate take his seat. He commanded the centurion to loose Jesus, and when this was done and Jesus stood free before him, Pilate said,

"Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus was silent. His eyes were bent on Pilate consideringly, and he scanned his face questioning the Procurator as to what manner of man he was. Pilate waited a moment and then asked with curiosity, "Do you refuse to answer me also? Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to put you to death?"

Jesus answered gently,

"You would have no power whatever over me if it had not been given you by God."

"Is it true that you claim to be the King of the Jews?" Pilate persisted, and Jesus asked,

"Do you mean what the Priests do, or are you speaking as a Roman?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied scornfully. "Your own nation and your Chief Priest have delivered you to me. What have you done?"

Then Jesus answered straightly,

"My kingdom is not of this earth. If it had been my servants would have fought for my deliverance. But my kingly power was not given me by this world."

Pilate leant forward.

"Then you are a king?" he said, and Jesus smiling answered sadly,

"You say that I am King, and it is true. But it is not as this world reckons kingship. Every

one who loves the truth is of my kingdom. For one end only was I born, for that only have I come, that I might testify to the truth."

Pilate's eyes were fixed on the face of Jesus and for a while some manner of understanding seemed to grow in him, for he said half impatiently, half wistfully,

"What is the truth?" Then, with a shrug of the shoulders, not waiting for a reply, he rose, saying: "Truth is like your kingdom. It is not on this earth." And leaving Jesus he went alone into the portico and stood before the waiting priests and the silent hostile crowd, and called out, with decision, "I find no crime in this man."

When the priests and rulers heard, they broke out into tumult greater than before, and the crowd following their leaders shouted also, for though many of them had never seen Jesus before and did not care what happened to him, they were all against the Roman Governor. Pilate waited, listening to the uproar, and when there came a lull he said again,

"There is no crime in him."

Caiaphas answered boldly,

"You are mistaken, Pilate. The man may have imposed himself on you, but he is a dangerous rebel. He is preaching sedition all over Judea.

It is a serious matter and there will be trouble if you do not take him in hand."

Pilate listened with a frown and then asked, shrewdly, "Why should I slay him for you?"

"Because you have taken away our power and we cannot slay him ourselves," said Caiaphas, bitterly. And at that the people burst into such a roar of applause that even Pilate was startled. When the roar died away he said impatiently,

"The man is only a dreamer. Why slay him at all?"

And Caiaphas in a loud voice answered (for he wished the people to hear, seeing that by their help he might overbear Pilate),

"Jesus may be a dreamer, but he is a dangerous one. He has come here to raise Judea. He began in Galilee and all the people followed him there."

Pilate interrupted him.

"Is Jesus a Galilean?" he asked quickly.

"He comes from Nazareth, a village of Galilee," said the High Priest.

"Then he is subject to Herod Antipas. Herod is in Jerusalem now. I will send Jesus to him. He shall decide his fate," said Pilate triumphantly, and regardless of the anger of the Priests he called for Longinus the centurion, and for a clerk to explain the matter to Herod. The centurion, forming his men, placed Jesus in their midst, and

the cohort plunged into the crowd, ploughing a way for itself. The people surging on either side closed up behind the soldiers, and Pilate turned to say farewell to Caiaphas. The Priest, his eyes full of suspicion, detained him, saying, "Herod will never dare pass sentence of death in Jerusalem, the Capital of the Roman dominion. He fears the Emperor. Was it for that you sent Jesus?"

"It may be so," Pilate answered lightly, looking down on him from the steps.

Then Caiaphas, heedless of courtesy, threatened Pilate. "Herod will send him back to you. You must judge him. If you release him you are no friend to Cæsar."

"I am no friend to government by priests," said Pilate coldly. And Caiaphas answered angrily:

"What will Rome say to the freeing of rebels if the Provinces rise? Will Cæsar balance between priest and soldier? I tell you, Pilate, if you slay this man you will so crush sedition that it will never again dare to raise its head in Judea."

Pilate paused and looked at Caiaphas. There was mockery on his lips as if he marvelled at the Priest's ignorance of the arts of government. Then, scoffing, he said, "The death of one Jew? Will that end sedition?" And he turned on his heel and went into the Government House.

XX

IT was as Caiaphas predicted. Herod, who lodged in the Old Palace near the Temple, was flattered because Pilate had remitted the case of Jesus to him, but he made no attempt at judgment. The Priests and Rulers (for we all went into the Palace at the tail of the soldiers) accused Jesus violently, but Herod was too much interested in marvels to listen to them. His curiosity was gratified at the sight of Jesus and he asked him many questions, hoping to stir him to work a miracle, but Jesus was silent before him. Then Herod grew flippant, and hearing from Pilate's clerk that Jesus claimed to be King of the Jews, he sent for a gorgeous old robe and dressed Jesus in it, mocking him, and amid much laughter ordered the king to be sent back to Pilate.

So the centurion brought Jesus back to the Prætorium. The Place was again packed with people and again Pilate came out to the portico. He called the Priests and Rulers and the leading men in the crowd to the front and there addressed them reasonably, saying,

"You brought this man before me charged with misleading your people, but when I examined him I found no ground for the accusations brought against him. Nor does Herod find him to blame, for you see he has sent him back to me. Jesus has done nothing deserving death. I will therefore give him a slight punishment and release him."

But the whole multitude burst into a shout,

"Away with this man!" they cried. "If you release any, release Barabbas."

Pilate called out,

"Barabbas is a robber, but what harm has Jesus done?"

The mob would not listen, but with one accord cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Pilate could not make his voice heard above the uproar. He stood patient outwardly, but with an ugly look in his eyes, and when at last the noise died away he said, with a bitter sneer,

"Would you have me crucify your king?"

And at that the uproar burst out worse than before, men crying in fury,

"We will not have him as our king. Release to us Barabbas!"

Pilate, seeing the demon that he had raised, controlled his anger and made an attempt to return to reason, saying, "I know it is your custom

to have a man released at your Festival. There is nothing in Jesus that deserves death. I will therefore scourge him and set him free."

But the mob would not have it so. The voice of Caiaphas cried high above the clamour,

"Any man who sets himself up as king is a rebel against Cæsar." And the mob took this up with a great shout.

"We want no king but Cæsar!"

Then Pilate, enraged, ordered Jesus to be brought into the portico, and Jesus, dressed in Herod's old robe, with his face covered with dust and blood, came forward and stood before the people. He was very tired, for he had been on his feet for hours, and the sight of his white face nearly broke my heart. Pilate looked at him in pity and, turning with contempt to the mob, said savagely, "Behold your King!"

There was a storm of outcries and the mob, furious at Pilate's contempt of them, raged and yelled, "Away with him! He is not our king. Crucify him! Crucify him!"

The tumult was beyond control. The guard moved nearer Pilate, but he waved them back and spoke to an attendant, and the man went and quickly returned bearing a silver bowl and a towel. At Pilate's command he held these up

and the mob, marvelling, fell into silence. Then Pilate, in sight of all the multitude, washed and dried his hands and throwing the towel aside stepped forward and said to the crowd,

"I am innocent of the blood of this just man. See you to it!"

And with loud shouts of triumph the people replied,

"His blood be on us and on our children."

The judgment seat was brought out again and taking his seat Pilate delivered Jesus to death. The centurion, whose duty it was to see the prisoners crucified, asked for the accusation that was put over the heads of the crucified, and the clerk brought Pilate's tablets, and he wrote. The Priests crowded round to see what he had written, and Pilate in scorn read to them his writing,

"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

Caiaphas remonstrated, saying:

"There is no accusation. People will not understand. Do not write 'King of the Jews,' but 'He said I am King of the Jews.' "

But Pilate refused, saying bitterly, "What I have written I have written."

He ordered the centurion to have it so transcribed on the Titulus, and then he gave orders for Barabbas to be released, and went away, and

the centurion and his soldiers took Jesus and led him to the Roman barracks in the Tower of Antonia, which was north of the buildings of the Temple.

XXI

IT was in the barrack yard of the Antonio, high above the city and Temple that Jesus was scourged by the Romans. They brought him from the Government House up the steep gangway and through the gate in the thick wall. The day was young when he climbed the steps and, still in Herod's old robe, went into the Fortress. The centurion left him here in charge of the soldiers, for he had to prepare the Titulus and rumour said that there were others to be crucified, and that the bars of the crosses had to be made ready. A few civilians came up the steps into the court-yard, but for the most part, the Jews afraid of defilement lingered on the stairways, or in the streets below. I waited inside the great gateway from which one could see right over the courts of the Temple and over the roofs and towers of the city beyond.

The soldiers off duty, who had been lounging against the walls of the barracks, pressed round their comrades of the cohort asking for news of the tumult in the city.

"Is there going to be a row?" they said. "These Jews are always asking for trouble. They want to set up a king, do they? The more of them we crucify the better."

The soldiers were of many races for Pilate had only two mixed legions in Judea, but they were at one in their contempt for the people they ruled.

Jesus stood in their midst alone, and suddenly, a big Northerner caught him by the arm and swung him round.

"Is this the cause of the row?" he questioned. "A scurvy king for a scurvy people."

He snatched the red military cloak from the shoulders of a comrade and flung it round Jesus.

"There! He looks more like a king now," he cried.

The others laughed at the joke, and one called out,

"Where is his throne?"

A broken piece of a great marble pillar lay by the wall, and some of the soldiers ran to it and rolled it out into the courtyard and set it on end, and the men who guarded Jesus pushed him forward and told him to be seated.

"He will need a crown," said the Northerner pulling the cloak into place.

"I'll get him one. I saw some faggots by the kitchen," another cried and ran, speedily return-

ing with an armful of the sharp thorns used for kindling fires. These the Northerner plaited into a crown which he thrust on to the head of Jesus. At the sight the soldiers burst into roars of laughter, and led by the Northerner, they began to pay Jesus mock honour, bowing low and bending the knee before him, crying out,

"Hail! King of the Jews!"

Jesus did not flinch. The blood trickled down his face from where the thorns had torn him, but he made no protest.

It was then that Longinus, the centurion, passed through the courtyard and stopped for a moment to watch the play of the soldiers. There was a carpenter with him who carried a long measuring reed, for they had been measuring the bars of the crosses, and Longinus, looking with a fatherly eye at the game of his men, said,

"You want a sceptre," and he took the rod from the carpenter and thrust it into the hand of Jesus. Jesus took it from him with courtesy and a word of thanks, and the centurion in astonishment fell back with an oath. The soldiers paused in their cruel game. Jesus sitting erect in the military cloak looked around on them, and in his weariness and bravery there was a simplicity that pierced even those hardened men. They

fell silent and Longinus, too, mocked no more, but said,

"Perhaps, boys, that's enough. We'd better get on with the scourging. I'll release the other men," and he went away. The soldiers on duty came forward and took the red cloak from Jesus. Then they stripped him to the loin-cloth and piled his clothes on the pillar. By this time Longinus had returned with the two other condemned men. One of them fought and struggled, and the soldiers had to drag him along. When they began to strip him he bit and tore and it took several men to overpower him. The other walked quietly to his place beside Jesus and submitted to be stripped without a movement. His body looked woefully thin when the soldiers took his rags from him, and suddenly he said reproachfully to them,

"It was for hunger I stole. Will you crucify me for that?"

The soldiers were taken aback, and one of them said, gruffly,

"It is not our fault. Orders must be obeyed."

The man was silenced, but when he saw a soldier come out of the barracks carrying a new leathern scourge with rough pieces of lead tied in every thong, a wild fear leapt into his eyes, and his starved body twitched all over in terror.

"I cannot bear it. I cannot bear it!" he cried aloud.

Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying,

"It is but a part of the sorrow of all the world. Let us bear it bravely. It is for God."

The man, hearing a beautiful voice, turned in astonishment, and when he saw the face of Jesus so worn and blood-stained his eyes suddenly filled with tears and he said,

"You have had your own bad time, brother."

But the other prisoner who had heard said savagely to Jesus,

"You think yourself great, don't you? I've heard of your setting yourself up to be king. You ought to be crucified, but what have we done to deserve it?"

At this Longinus cried out for silence and ordered the soldiers to lead them away into the inner court where the scourging pillars stood.

I did not see Jesus scourged. I could not bear it. I went down the gangway and into the courts of the Temple. My soul was numb. There was no feeling left in me, though I saw each object with such distinctness that the polished slabs on the walls of the Antonia up which no assault was possible, the graded stairway with its stone traverses to keep the feet from slipping, and the great

flags of the pavement that I sat looking down on, live in my mind to this day. I was still in this palsy when I saw Judas come across the Court. He did not seem real to me, but like a figure seen in a dream, but, nevertheless, I called out,

"Judas! Is that you?"

He came nearer and I, still in a dream, said "What is it, Judas? You look like death."

At that Judas came close to me and cried out, bitterly,

"Oh, man, can you not see what has happened to me? A door has opened in me and I have seen my own soul. What is there left for me but death? I have told them, yea, in their very sanctuary, that I have sinned, but they do not care. It is not their business they said. No one cares save Jesus, and I have sent him to his death. He trusted me, even though he knew I should betray him he risked his life and trusted, and I did betray him."

He sat down beside me. His dark eyes were full of pain and like a bewildered child he put his hand on my arm.

"That I should have done this to him when I love him. It was for him I would have fought."

His tone changed and he said pettishly,

"I tell you man I miss him. His face is always before me and the kindness in his eyes."

I held him by the sleeve and fingered it.

"They would have taken him anyhow," I said to console him.

"But not through me," he cried, uncomforted.

I stared at him for I felt his wits had fled. It seemed so strange that he could feel so much.

"Jesus would forgive you," I said dully, and at that he turned on me in agony and cried,

"That is why I must die. I thought he didn't care, but he cares more than I. I thought he had no passion and I have seen him in the midst of it. What is there left for me but death?" and he tore his garment from me and went.

And then suddenly my palsy left me and I could feel again. These things were really happening. Jesus would soon be dead. Judas was about to die, too, but my one thought was to see Jesus. Rising, distracted I ran back to the steep stairway to the Antonia and passing through the groups of waiting people I climbed rapidly to the gateway and entered the courtyard.

The soldiers were bringing Jesus out from the inner yard. They had dressed him in his own clothes again, and two of them held him by the arms, supporting him. The Titulus that hung round his neck said in large white letters, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

The thieves came behind. Their scourging had

been lighter, for they could walk without help. They, too, had their inscriptions proclaiming their names, Gesmas and Dysmas, and for what faults they died. In the middle of the courtyard the carpenter stood ready with nails and a hammer, and a ladder and three heavy bars of wood lay on the ground. Several rough men waited in a corner and when the centurion called out asking if there were any mates of the prisoners present who would bear their cross-bars, two of them came forward and took up the bars of Gesmas and Dysmas. But Jesus had no mate. The centurion would not give me leave to carry the bar, saying he dare not as I was a patrician and he had seen me with Pilate. So Jesus steadied himself, holding by the hand of a soldier, and the heavy bar was laid on his back where his tunic covered the marks of the scourging. Then the centurion's guard formed in front and behind the prisoners, and the carpenter came too, with his ladder and nails, and they all moved forward out of the gate and down the stairway. The crowd that stood below looked up in excitement and came closer to see all. Some women, whose veils hid their faces, were waiting and followed in a little group. Gesmas, the man who had fought the soldiers, walked in front, boasting that he was not afraid to die, but Dysmas who came behind did not speak. His

eyes were fixed on Jesus watching every movement. The sun was hot, and the sweat poured down the face of Jesus and he swayed now and then under the weight of the cross. A depression had fallen on the soldiers and they marched in silence, and as if reluctantly. When some paces up the street, beyond the stairway, Jesus stumbled and lurched heavily and Dysmas called out sharply, "He's not strong enough to carry it"; he was not rebuked, but Longinus halted the column and himself adjusted the heavy bar so that it set more easily on the shoulders of Jesus, asking him if that felt better. Jesus thanked him and they started again.

A few yards further on Jesus reeled and fell.

"Can't you see he's done?" Dysmas cried out, and again no man rebuked him, but the column halted of itself and Longinus and a soldier lifted the heavy bar from the body of Jesus and raised him up.

The women who followed were weeping, and one of them plucked the veil from her head and rushed forward. She held out a corner of her veil to a water carrier who stood by, and he sluiced it with fresh water from his goat-skin and she tenderly wiped the blood and sweat from the face of Jesus reviving him so that he opened his eyes and

smiled. At the sight the women broke into wails and beat their breasts.

Jesus said to Longinus,

"My spirit is willing, but my body is weak."

Then he turned to the women and said,

"Do not weep for me, women of Jerusalem. Weep for yourselves and for your children. A time is coming when only the barren will be happy and those who have never borne children. The spirit of this world that is killing me will also lay hands upon you. They that rule by the sword will not spare women and children."

He rocked on his feet as he spoke, and Longinus looked round for help.

Beside me stood a big negro who carried two market baskets full of vegetables. His black face and his blood-streaked eyes shone with pity, and when Longinus called to him he stepped forward willingly, but remembering his baskets he paused and looked hesitatingly at me. I took the baskets from him and he went and lifted up the cross-bar as if it were a toy, and the soldiers, steadying Jesus, we went on through the narrow streets and out by the Damascus gate.

Three posts stood ready by the roadside on a hillock where all men could see. The prisoners were offered drugged wine but Jesus would not take it. So stripping him again to the loin-cloth,

they laid him on the ground and stretching out his arms, they bound them with rope to the cross-bar and nailed his hands to the wood. Then they brought him to the foot of the post and a man on the ladder hauling with a rope and others below lifting, they hoisted the cross-bar, with the body of Jesus, till it jarred into the socket prepared. Then they tied it securely. Afterwards they did the same to the two thieves. When this was done they threw the clothing of the prisoners into a heap and diced for it. Then the guard divided and half returned to the barracks and half under Longinus remained to watch.

Simon stood beside me with his market baskets. The tears rolled down his black cheeks, and from time to time he wiped them off with the back of his hand.

But the mob that lingered looking on the agony of the crucified had no pity, and the travellers on the Damascus road who stopped to see, and the leading men of the city, sneered at Jesus and said,

"He wanted to save others. Let him save himself if he is the Son of God."

They called out to Jesus, mocking him, "If you are God's son come down from the cross." "You that trusted in God get God to deliver you now. Come down from the cross and we will believe in you."

And reading the Titulus they said,

"Where is your kingdom now, you King of the Jews?"

I felt as if the point of a sharp sword had been broken off inside my heart. How could they mock at Jesus in his pain? How could men watch with curious eyes to see how much the thieves could suffer? A blackness fell upon me and though the sun still shone I could not see the light. Surely human nature was cruel to the bone?

Gesmas had writhed his body upwards, so loosening the ropes that by tearing his palms with the nails in them he could get one elbow over the cross-bar. He was drugged and half drunk and he cried out to Jesus.

"Can't you see how we suffer? If you are the son of God take us down from these crosses. Save us and yourself." His elbow slipped and in his torment his voice broke and he began to curse and to swear, reviling Jesus and blaming him for the pain.

Dysmas who hung to the right had turned his head so that he could see the face of Jesus and he said to Gesmas, "What has this man done to you that you curse him so? They have some excuse for torturing us for we have broken their laws, but he has done nothing."

Then he said to Jesus,

"Do not forget me when you come into your kingdom?"

And Jesus, his face drawn with pain, but his voice still kind, answered,

"This very day when this pain is over, we shall be together again." And the man, comforted, set his lips to endure to the end.

When I saw this, shame came upon me and an agony of remorse. For all my life I had seen such sights and had taken for granted that such men were worthy of death. Why, all Judea was dotted with crosses and on them men had died. In every country of the world such deaths were inflicted by those in power. Since the beginning of time it had been so. Man had always tortured man. Because of my neglect these things had been. I had agreed that that should be which need not have been. The anguish that man gives to men was my fault too. But Jesus had not been blind. He had seen the pain of man and had raised his voice against the cruelty showing men the remedy. His message would have saved the world from such horrors. God spoke through him for his nature was greater than ours. But the great engine of government had caught Jesus and he was dying, and I was his murderer and the murderer of the men who died with him. Because of my

blindness my friend must die. I turned my face aside and wept.

As the day drew on a certain awe seemed to fall upon the crowd, and the mockers went and few were left save friends of Jesus. The depression still held the soldiers. They had nailed the prisoners to the cross as a part of their day's work, but they had worked in silence, and now they did not hinder the lovers of Jesus from drawing near. Mary the Mother of Jesus, and Mary of Magdala and the other women came and stood close to the crosses and no man ordered them away. Jesus opened his eyes and saw his mother standing there and John, who had come up behind the women. He called out the name of John, who came closer and Jesus said,

"You will take care of her, John?" and John, choked with tears, put his arm round the shoulders of Mary.

Jesus said to his mother,

"He will be your son." His lips were parched and he spoke with difficulty. His eyes closed again. The women wept aloud, and Longinus taking a pike from one of the soldiers, tore a handful of hyssop from a bush growing near by and steeped it in a bowl of the soldiers' wine and tying it on the pike moistened the lips of Jesus. Jesus opened his eyes and smiled in thanks.

"He will not last long," said Longinus to the women to comfort them. "These others are stronger. They have hours of this before them. We soldiers have heavy work to do sometimes."

The hot sun beat down upon the heads of the crucified and their limbs were swelling where the ropes tied them. Gesmas still writhed and muttered, but even his strength was failing. Dysmas hung half fainting with his long anguish. Jesus moved his head uneasily against the hard wood of the cross as a sick man moves his head on a hot pillow. I hid my eyes from their dying faces, for a great reverence came upon me and who was I to gaze upon their agony?

A thunderstorm was blowing up from the mountains and the clouds hid the sun. The women stood praying for Jesus and for the thieves, and the centurion leaned on the pike and was silent. Simon and the soldiers were silent too. For a long time we stayed thus.

Suddenly Jesus opened his eyes and gave a loud cry. The gladness in his voice startled all who heard, for it seemed a shout of victory.

"It is finished," he cried. "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."

And with that cry he died.

The centurion turning away in awe gave the pike back to the soldier from whom he had bor-

rowed it. He stood silent for a moment and then he said,

"Truly, this man was a son of God."

And Simon the negro with a sob gathered up his baskets and went back into the city, but the women, weeping bitterly, stayed by the cross.

XXII

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA buried the body of Jesus in his own tomb. He went to Pilate, who gave him an order to take the body from the cross. Pilate was astonished that Jesus had died so soon, and gave the order willingly, and Joseph and Nicodemus and the women brought spices to the tomb and did all that our customs enjoin for the burial of the dead. I went back with Nicodemus to his house, and after that I remember no more, for something seemed to break in my head with a great pain, and I lay ill for weeks and knew no one. The summer was waning before I was able to go about my business in the north again.

One the evening before I was to set out for Galilee, I went to the Garden of Gethsemane. I went by way of the path outside the south wall along which the Temple officials had led Jesus to Caiaphas, and I climbed between the olive trees to where Jesus had stood looking at the sunset. I stopped close to the dry stone wall where I could see all Judea spread out before me. The day had been hot, and a haze hung over the mountains

of Moab and hid their colour. The sun had scorched the land and there was no glory in it now. The beauty had gone from the earth.

After a time I turned aside. Why should I stay there? Life was ugly and barren. There was no joy left in it. I crossed the open space where Jesus had gone apart to pray, and passed, as he had done, between the twisted boughs of the olives. A narrow track led higher up the mountain and I followed it until I came to where the olives ceased giving place to tall cypresses and a few forest trees. Was it here that Jesus had prayed in his agony? What did it matter? He had been killed in spite of his prayers. What was the good of loving when death came to end all?

I sat down and leaned my head against one of the trees of God. Somehow the touch of the wild tree comforted me. The garden had been planted by man, the olive trees and the dry stone wall were man's work, and man was cruel and stupid. There was no hope in a world ruled by men. But God had made the forest trees.

I lay there for a long time, quieted, marvelling at the strong twist in the trunk of a cypress and the wonder of the grey shadow on its green boughs. The sun was declining and the heat haze still hid the distant mountains. An odd snoring noise had begun somewhere and I listened, half unconscious-

ly waiting, as each long snore ceased, for the next to begin. The sound seemed to come from all around me. It could not be a man for there was no man near. A vague curiosity stirred me as to where the noise came from, and soon I rose and went to see. The sound did not cease at the crunch of my footsteps. I went towards an old hollow tree and the snoring grew louder. I looked up into the tree and saw a small owl sitting on a branch above my head. It turned a pinched nose and two dark eyes set in a fluff of pale yellow down, and regarded me. There was no fear about it. It moved its head as a kitten does, and there was a thick wrinkle all down its pale brown neck where the skin and feathers doubled. For a moment it gazed at me with an indifferent curiosity, and then it turned its head away and went on with its snoring. I leant against the tree and watched it, and something smote me in the heart with agony that it should be alive, so young and so quaint, and that Jesus should be dead. It was a little owl. It had not been alive when Jesus died.

As I stood grappling with my misery, I heard a gay voice singing and a woman in the blue clothing of a peasant turned the corner of the path and came towards me. It was Mary Magdalene. I looked at her in amazement. Were all women

heartless as all men were cruel? Jesus was dead and the world was black to me, but the sunshine was still golden to her. And she had seemed to love him.

Mary came nearer and at the sight of my face her song stopped.

"How can you sing, Mary, when Jesus is dead?" I said, and turned to go.

But she caught me by the sleeve.

"Jesus is not dead," she cried, and I stopped short, a wild impossible hope springing upon me.

"What do you mean, Mary? I saw him die."

"And so did I. But I have seen him since," she said.

"Seen him? Are you mad?" I said.

She shook her head.

"You have been ill. You have not heard. Sit down and I will tell you."

So we sat down at the foot of the tree, and the little owl snored above us.

"You must see that something has happened," she said. "You cannot think that I could be so callous. I who loved him more than any. Had I not more to love him for?"

Her eyes filled with tears, and she put her hand on my arm.

"We harlots have to fend for ourselves. Nobody takes care of us," she said. "Do you know

what it means to us, amongst whom love is bought and sold, to have it offered as a gift? Jesus said God cared. Have I not more to love him for than you?"

I sat silent, ashamed of my suspicion of her. The impossible hope had died away, and I listened sadly.

"I was broken for days after his death. But look at me now. Am I the same woman who stood weeping beneath the cross, hopeless and in misery?"

"What has happened to you, Mary?" I asked. The dullness had settled on me again and I thought she raved.

"I have seen Jesus," she said. "At first I thought it was the gardener. But then I saw that it was Jesus."

"You were dreaming, Mary. You have deceived yourself," I said, but she shook her head and smiled.

"You think I am a wild woman who cannot tell truth from dreams. And I tell you, no, I am not mad. Look at me and see if it is not true."

I looked at her and indeed she seemed quite sane, but her talk was mad.

"You think you saw his spirit?" I asked.

"I suppose it was his spirit," she replied. "But what does it matter what I saw, body or spirit?

I saw Jesus alive still, and whereas I was in misery I am now full of joy."

"You have deceived yourself, Mary," I said again. And she cried out vehemently.

"Could I be happy if Jesus was really dead, if he was only a dreamer and his vision of the kingdom impossible? Others have seen him too. Men everywhere are asking what has happened to us. When you see Peter and John again you can judge for yourself. Peter is altogether changed. People are asking 'How have these barbarous and contemptible people suddenly become wise? Who has given them this? How have they been instructed?' Our minds are fervent like a fire that burns. We cannot be unhappy."

"It is only a dream, Mary," I said dully.

"Would Peter spread the good news with such fire despising death, for a dream?" she cried. "They say of him that he was born amongst us, and grew up with us, and was feeble of understanding, but that now he is inspired, and men hear from him things that enrich them and make life great and noble. Can this be without the finger of God?"

I threw myself face downwards on the ground. I could not listen to her talk, for there was no hope within me, and it broke my heart. Mary touched me gently on the shoulder and said,

"It does not matter whether you believe that I saw Jesus or dreamed. What matters is that we must spread the news of his kingdom. Cannot a dream alter the face of the world? There is a power within me that forces me to go on, that makes me want to suffer everything for everybody. What matter how it came? Shall I not yield to it? And you, too, when it comes to you?"

And she went away and left me there under the tree of God.

It was in Galilee, on the mountain where I had first heard Jesus teach, that hope came back to me. After a hard day's work I had wandered away from the village, and climbed the mountain and sat looking down on the great plain with its vineyards and olive gardens, and the thin grey smoke that rose in the air as the women made ready the evening meal. The voices of the children driving the cattle home came from the plain, and far in the distance a cow lowed to her calf and the sheep baaed to their lambs. Darkness was falling, but I could not go. The light faded and blackness covered the land. I bowed my head on my arms and sat on, too tired for sleep, too hopeless for pain, too sad for tears. The wild beasts cried aloud in the night, but I did not move. All night I sat there, and in the morning came the dawn.

First there came the stillness. No bird cheeped, no wild beast cried aloud. A faint glimmer of light showed the dark masses of the forests on the hills, and the dim silver line of the sea. The golden light spread and touched the land and colour awoke again in earth and sky. The sun came up behind the mountains and the shadows lay from east to west along the plain. It was then that the vision came to me. I saw nothing. I heard nothing, but as the dawn spread slowly over the land, waking the earth to beauty, something awoke in my heart. I do not know what it was. I have no words to tell of it. The earth lay before me bathed in a light that men seldom saw, a clear radiance that transfigured each familiar place and gave the world the beauty of a dream. And yet it was still the earth. The forests and moors, the mountains and valleys, were the same, but another light lay upon them. So it was with my soul. An intense, still joy awoke in my heart, a joy in which there was no shadow of restlessness or disturbance, and the old gay sense of something added to life came back to me. It seemed as though Jesus had watched by me all night and I had not known it. The place was full of his presence. Or was it only that the earth was my healer?

The glory of the vision blinded me, and I hid my eyes. There was no death. Each night the

beauty of the earth died into darkness, each dawn in wonder the light rose again on it. It was so with the spirit of man. In tribulation and in agony happiness died, but in beauty and glory joy lived again. I rolled over on my face on the coarse mountain grass and lay there thinking. The greatest miracle in the world had happened to me. I had seen the transfiguration in the look of life that an emotion brings. A remembrance of beauty and love and immortal passion, the romance of the earth and of life had taken hold of me. The smallest, meanest things had gained a power of signifying the greatest, noblest things. The world was full of wonders. Nothing was impossible to love.

The children had begun to drive the cattle out. Their shrill cries rose in the air before I stirred. When I sat up and looked at the earth again it was broad, garish day. The beauty of the world no longer caught my breath away. In the bustle of life my vision must fade, but I did not mind. I had seen the eternal beauty that lies hidden in the commonplace. There was a work to do, and like Peter and the disciples I must do it, no matter what the cost. So I rose to my feet to go back to my village and take up my job again.

THE END

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